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[GRATIS.]

THE CHURCH-RATE DEBATE.

Remembering the "Black Wednesdays" of last Session, the well-organised strength of the Opposition, and the social and political influences of the Church Militant, we strolled down to Westminster this day week, with our minds resigned to defeat. If the Abolition Bill should be thrown out, as was calculated, by a majority of ten, there was the consolation that it had become the great political question of the day, that it could never be displaced from that commanding position, that the conflict, however severe and protracted, could have but one termination, and that every close struggle, and every delay, was ventilating that larger question which looms in the Parliamentary distance.

As early as two o'clock, there were the customary signs of a great field day. The lobby was alive with excited visitors hoping to get inside, or at least to pick up information, and of members passing to and from the library and smoking-room. Ever and anon the care-worn face of Sir Charles Douglas might be seen, and had vanished before you could get a second look. It was an anxious day for the honourable baronet—preceded by an anxious week. To whip up a host of members—careless and indifferent, or occupied, as the case may be—is an onerous task even to men who, like Mr. Brand and Colonel Taylor, are the recognised whips of their party, and invested with the requisite authority. But Sir Charles suffers all the disadvantage of being only a private "whip," with no Treasury at his back, and no Patronage Secretary to second his appeals. His pale face was the only visible sign of the many days and nights of anxiety and hard work he had passed through in order that Sir J. Trelawny's bill might obtain a majority. Still, it is only fair to say that without the efficient and hearty help of Mr. Brand, the Government whipper-in, 286 members—five more than were ever before got together to vote for abolition—could not have been marshalled in support of the bill of a private member. That result would have been equally impossible but for the quiet but ceaseless activity of Sir Charles Douglas.

Passing into the House, we find the mild Mr. Sotherton Estcourt at the table, elaborately, if not very successfully, urging arguments in support of his amendment. There was a full muster on the Ministerial side, but the Opposition benches were thin. All, however, listened with respect to a country gentleman and ex-Minister who, as Mr. Bright afterwards said, discussed the question "in a spirit the most moderate, the most friendly, and, as far as he could see, the most just;" though it can hardly be said his prosaic remarks were very well worth listening to. We missed the opening speech of Sir John Trelawny, which was, according to report, more adroit and forcible than usual, notwithstanding the severity of his recent illness, of which there were still traces; and Mr. Buxton's declaration in favour of Mr. Bright's plan. To return, however, to Mr. Estcourt. He repudiated his own compromise plan of last Session, on the ground that it could not have settled the matter, and was quite ready, he said, to follow up his amendment with some proposal in the form of a substantive resolution, should the fortune of war give him the victory. It was of course well understood that this was only a colourable pretext for doing nothing, after the Abolition Bill had been thrown out.

The Home Secretary appears to have been unavoidably absent, and Sir G. C. Lewis rose in his place. We must confess to preferring Sir G. Grey on these subjects to his colleague, who abhors sentiment and has the knack in his phlegmatic way of letting down every subject that excites interest out of doors. "It's only a trifling grievance after all"—was the tone of Sir George Lewis, who, however, propounded anew his pew-rent scheme to the great horror of Anglo-Catholic members, but leaving on others the impression that he would like some day to propose it as a Cabinet measure. Between the two last-named speakers, the House had got down to freezing-point, and the Speaker retired for refreshment; perhaps to raise his spirits. Meanwhile, the Opposition benches began to fill, and Colonel Taylor to scan them with the eye of a detective. Mr. Brand, probably because he had done his work—unless he is

belied, he had found means to bring home members from Paris, if not from Rome—came up to the bar, looking as innocent of any "whipping" propensities as Mr. Gladstone himself who shortly after took up for awhile the same position; while Sir Charles Douglas flitted about, as if to make up for his inability to be in a dozen places and look after a dozen members at the same time.

"Who's that?" was the repeated exclamation as a tall gentleman in mature life rose behind the front Opposition Bench on the return of Mr. Speaker. It proved to be Mr. Macdonough, a rising Irish Conservative barrister with (it is said) the vision of a judgeship floating before him. He spoke in a forensic and ex cathedra style, "flatly contradicting" the legal definitions of the Minister of War. After some altercation between them, Mr. Macdonough was fairly extinguished by his cool antagonist. Another "Who's that?" and "Hush" indicated something unusual. There was a feeling of curiosity as an elderly gentleman rose from the fourth row of benches behind Ministers, and it was whispered to "Know-nothings," that Mr. John Remington Mills, a leading Dissenter, was making his maiden speech. And a very good beginning it was—plain, short, practical, straightforward. The silence when Mr. Mills sat down was more marked than when he rose—a very favourable sign. In his first essay, the hon. member for Wycombe has shown good sense and discretion. His speech was to the purpose, was encouragingly received, and afterwards favourably noticed by generous Mr. Bright. We congratulate Mr. Mills on having passed so well through the most trying of ordeals to a public man. The House relapses into conversation as another Irishman catches the Speaker's eye—not, however, Mr. Maguire, who seemed primed for the occasion, and whose voice would have been a help to the bill, always supposing that Parliamentary speeches do influence votes—but Major Barttelot, who at last succeeded in attracting a moment's attention by mentioning Lord John Russell and quoting Hansard against him.

Just then Mr. Bright might be seen leaning forward and looking earnestly towards the chair. Scarcely had the Major disappeared than the words, "Mr. Bright," uttered by the Speaker, gave a kind of electric shock to the House. The bar was speedily cleared by members rushing to their seats, among whom might be seen Lord Robert Cecil, who will perchance indite an article for the next *Quarterly*, sneering at the "demagogic" member for Birmingham. Honourable gentlemen continued to pour in until the House was full and silence reigned. It would be a salutary lesson to some of our country editors, who take their cue from the *Times* and *Saturday Reviver*, to be present on some great occasion when Mr. Bright is speaking—to see how the House cheers him, laughs at his jokes, enjoys his caustic hits at Palmerston or Dizzy, and winces under his plain but honest reproofs, while the stalwart object of their admiration and fear stands impassive and takes his own course, unmoved by "Hears" or "Ohs." "Can this be the used-up Mr. Bright?" would probably be the first exclamation of our surprised provincial brother. Of all his Church-rate speeches last Wednesday's was, perhaps, the most happy, as well as the most telling. His arguments and appeals were at times felicitously expressed—as for example, when he dared any hon. member opposite to say that the Church of England, which had a monopoly of wealth and influence in the country, could not repair its own churches and wash its own surpluses. (Great cheering.) To say that it was the best speech of the debate is very inadequate praise. Compared to it Mr. Disraeli's was a mere explosion of fireworks. The cheers came, not grudgingly, but in volleys, and at the end of every few sentences. It is nearly a twelvemonth since we heard Mr. Bright on the same subject. He was on both occasions weighty and impressive. But last Wednesday, on which side soever may have been the change, the House and himself were manifestly on better terms. Not only was the orator more genial, but his hearers more indulgent, than we have before observed. The Opposition didn't at all object to his Voluntaryism, since he showed that it was *all their own*, and that it had effected the revolution which had come over the Church

in the last fifty years. With them he tried his powers of persuasion; but to Lord Palmerston and his colleagues—"upper clerks" rather than statesmen—he administered a severe rebuke for keeping place without a policy, and refusing to take up a question on which the Ministerialists were, almost to a man, agreed. The cheers from both sides at this point were unmistakable. When he showed that what Mr. Estcourt wanted was simply an equivalent for what they would lose by Church-rates, and the Opposition assented, Mr. Bright made good use of the admission, asked whence the 250,000*l.* was to come, and whether they expected to get it from a rate that was increasingly obnoxious and yearly diminishing. It was evident also, that the plan of settlement, for a second time proposed by Mr. Bright, met with increased favour in the House, as it has done out of doors, and that his joke for Mr. Estcourt and himself to put their heads together and bring out a scheme, was not so unacceptable, even to the Opposition. But we will not indulge the bad taste of picking out the best points of a magnificent speech which all will desire to read, and the moral effect of which is seen in the *Times*' article of the next day.

On this occasion (quoth the leading journal) the only man to do common justice to the inherent strength, the self-supporting zeal, and the just popularity of the Church, was no other than John Bright, who had more to say for the Church than Sir John Pakington and Mr. Disraeli. What he said, too, he justified by the fact of the case, the notorious fact, that the Church of England in this metropolis, in the great towns, and indeed, everywhere, under all circumstances, maintains itself just as well, whether it levies Church-rates or has nothing to do with them. In this metropolis, indeed, we may say, "*Si argumentum quaeris, circumspice*," for on all sides there rise up splendid and commodious churches, without one sixpence of compulsory support for either the fabric, or the worship, or the minister. "Save us from our friends," may the Church say on reading the speeches of her advocates yesterday; and with equal justice may she thank Mr. Bright for his candid recognition of her good qualities—shared, as he holds, by other communities—and his just appreciation of her strength and stability.

The hon. member for Birmingham said much the same things last year as on Wednesday on Voluntaryism in the Church. The praises which are now extorted from the *Times* must therefore be set down either to the greater popularity of Mr. Bright in the House, the knowledge that Voluntaryism is in higher favour there, or a clearer conviction that the Church-rate question is *not* going back. It really did appear to us, as we sat listening on Wednesday, that the arguments of Mr. Bright and his coadjutors are telling even upon staunch Churchmen, and we could almost imagine them rubbing their eyes with astonishment at the discovery that what had seemed a hobgoblin was in reality their good genius. At all events we make bold to affirm that no such triumphant defence of Voluntaryism has been delivered within the walls of St. Stephen's. It was worth a score of votes for the question, of which Church-rates abolition is the mere adjunct, to be raised far above party and sect to such a moral elevation.

It was quite amusing to see Sir John Pakington striving, by petty criticism, abuse of the Liberation Society, stale quotations, and pompous expressions of his respect for "religious" Dissenters, to weaken the effect of Mr. Bright's massive oratory, and to drag the House down again to his narrow party objects. The late Secretary of the Admiralty is a master of clap-trap; and if a shrill, scolding voice, agitation of coat-tails, and incessant twirling about to invite the cheers of his friends would save a falling cause, Sir John Pakington is the man for the occasion.

The critical time had now arrived. Last year the Abolition cause lost some votes—in fact, the majority—because the division was taken too early. The clamorous cries of "Divide, divide," that ensued when Sir John Pakington sat down, revealed the danger. But this time the supporters of the bill were not to be thus foiled. Mr. Dillwyn stood in the breach. He occupied the pass while the supports were coming up. Volley after volley of tumultuous noise was fired over his head, and every time he paused renewed attempts were made to put him down. Thus twenty minutes of precious time were saved—perhaps as many votes—by

the intrepidity of the member for Swansea, who spoke with an emphasis and energy that often rose above the storm that raged around. Mr. Dillwyn did a double service. He both saved time, and roused up the Opposition leader, whose appearance at the table not only quenched the tumult, but dissipated the fears of the friends of the bill. The tone of Mr. Disraeli's speech was evidently governed by his expectation of a triumph. Had not Colonel Taylor shortly before gone and whispered agreeable news in his ear, the right hon. gentleman would probably not have risen. As it is, the Liberation Society have to thank him for his serviceable speech. Why had the Church-rate question occupied for thirty years the attention of Parliament? he asked with the air of a discoverer—

It was that the pretext for legislation was not the real cause of the movement (cheers); and it was only after these repeated discussions, after these repeated attempts, and after these influential interferences that the truth was at last discovered, and the issue was recognised as one which concerned not the management of Church-rates, but the existence of ecclesiastical establishments and the connexion of the Church of England with the State. (Renewed cheering.)

Surely the Liberation Society cannot object that their battle should be fought under cover of this obnoxious grievance? But we are bound to confess that Mr. Disraeli's brilliant but dangerous theories did not altogether go down on his own side. Some unruly members below the gangway on his own side, who seem to have little faith in his ingenious tactics, were so restive that only loud cries of "Order" could silence them. Still, the Opposition leader was animated and jubilant, and the contrast between his impassive face as he sits with head uncovered, and the play of his features in the heat of debate, is very striking. What a pity he overacts his part, and in striving after novelty sinks to bathos. The reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury, *apropos* of his abortive bill, was highly significant. The Primate deserves unbounded respect. But this is not a Church question—it is one for politicians. In other words—"Let us make capital out of it, and ride into power to the cry of 'The Church in danger!'" Mr. Disraeli's was a *crescendo* speech with a vengeance. Not merely the Established Church was in danger (when he closed), "but the principle of local government, and the hereditary privileges of the great mass of the population." After this gigantic issue had been raised there was a brief pause, perhaps for the House to recover breath; or it may be to give Lord Palmerston an opportunity of speaking. All eyes were turned to the Treasury Bench, but his lordship made no sign, and Sir John Trelawny replied with point and commendable brevity, ably contrasting Mr. Disraeli's present frantic alarm with his former indifference to the bill on which he used to abstain from voting.

The question was then put. Clearly the lungs of Liberal members must have improved if we may judge from the Speaker's decision that the "Ayes" had it. "Strangers must withdraw" was the signal for clearing out the seats below the Speaker's gallery; and the outgoing and incoming tide struggled for a moment or two in the lobby. The bells tingled furiously, as though the Palace of Westminster were on fire, and the stream of members poured from all sides into the lobby. Some time before the doors were banged to, the current had ceased to flow. There were no stragglers—not even an Irishman clamouring for admittance. It was a neck-and-neck struggle—no excuses—few pairs—and most of those allowed must have been subsequently made up.

Hastening to the reporters' gallery for a view of the division scene, we found the floor and benches of the House deserted, with the exception of the tellers and officials, though not a seat was vacant in the Speaker's or Strangers' gallery. The tellers soon left on their exciting errand. The issue could hardly be doubted. "We shall poll 285, and have a majority of from three to five," we heard a Conservative member complacently remark about five o'clock, and the downcast face of Sir Charles Douglas corroborated the surmise. Slowly the members returned to their seats, blocked up the bar, filled the lobby beyond, and overflowed into the side galleries. Lord Palmerston, as he emerged from the "Aye" lobby, and walked firmly but unconcernedly to his seat, attracted special attention. Anon there was a buzz of excitement, then audible whispers of "Another tie," and at last a ringing Opposition cheer as the paper was handed to Colonel Taylor, and the tellers advanced with many bows to the table. For some moments the Tory whipper-in essayed in vain to speak amid the prolonged shouts of triumph from his friends. At length silence was restored, and he read out the numbers—

Noes	...	...	...	...	287
Ayes	...	...	...	...	286

Majority against the bill ... 1

The doors were opened, and out rushed a number of Liberal members, apparently under the impression that all was over. They were soon, of course, beyond recall. These names are all duly recorded. Hardly had they left when the bells gave warning of another division. We may observe that it is customary to take one vote as decisive. But when Mr. Estcourt's division was put another division was called for, with the following result:—

For the amendment	...	...	...	288
Against it	...	...	...	271

Majority ... 17

There was again vociferous cheering, though what advantage, beyond a good division, the Tories gained by passing a resolution which Sir G. C. Lewis described as being "perfectly nugatory and unmeaning," we are at a loss to understand. But it is worthy of mention, as showing the advantage of good generalship, that Mr. Disraeli, when the first vote was being taken, addressed his followers in the lobby, telling them there would be another division, and urging them not to leave the House. How well the advice was followed the division list bears witness. Had there been any one to speak authoritatively on the other side, or if the Government whip could have formally co-operated with Sir Charles Douglas (who was then "telling" votes) the result of the second division would probably have been different.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the debate was the strong feeling expressed in words and by cheers from all sides of the House that the responsible Ministers of the Crown ought to take in hand the settlement of the Church-rate question, and the hardly less emphatic opinion that Lord Palmerston will decline the task.

THE CHURCH-RATES ABOLITION BILL.

On Wednesday last, at the morning sitting of the House of Commons,

Sir JOHN TRELAWNY moved the second reading of the Church-rates Abolition Bill. Last year the third reading of the bill was negatived by the casting vote of the Speaker, and now the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Estcourt), had given notice of an amendment. He attributed the defeat of the bill last year to the fact that the friends of the Church had undertaken to bring in a measure for a compromise, but they had altogether failed in their object. They admitted the necessity of settling the question, and had attempted to do so; but experience confirmed the view he had always taken—that the only way was in the manner proposed by his bill. It had been asked why the descendants of the English Puritans, who would suffer anything for their faith, should object to be "ticketed" before the world as Nonconformists. Now, he did not wish to say anything offensive, but these were not days in which our toleration was as great as we boasted that it was. A question was asked the other night of our Foreign Minister respecting the treatment of Protestants in Spain; but if he were a Spanish Minister himself he should write a very insolent despatch in answer to such a proceeding—(a laugh)—and remind hon. gentlemen that they were really less tolerant than they claimed to be. The evidence of persons holding certain opinions with regard to religion would not now be accepted in our courts of justice unless they commenced their testimony by telling a blasphemous lie. But let him turn to the present state of our parish churches; but the fact was that under the existing system very many of our parish churches, in respect to architecture, comfort, and accommodation, were in a most disgraceful condition. Church-rates were the dry rot of the Established Church, and it would be far better for her own interests if she struck out into deeper water, and threw herself upon the Voluntary principle. If that impost were done away with, he believed that in a single year a machinery would be set up in every parish to supply the deficiency. There were among the clergy men of untiring and unconquerable zeal. The case of Stone church, in Kent—one of our best specimens of the early pointed style—well illustrated the mischief that was done to the most beautiful ecclesiastical edifices when subjected to the neglect or the eccentric taste of churchwardens, as well as exemplified the admirable manner in which the work of restoration could be carried out when supported by voluntary effort, and executed by a first-rate architect. It was frequently asserted that those who supported this bill were enemies of the Church, but he contended that they were not friends of the Church of England who sought to compel men who had once belonged to her to remain attached for ever under canonical subjection. Then, again, it was always insisted that the Liberation Society, which supported the abolition of Church-rates, had ulterior views, and sought to effect a complete separation of Church and State, but hon. gentlemen opposite themselves met that objection by declaring that those who clamoured for the separation of Church and State were a small but noisy portion of the Dissenting community. The fact was that Church-rates were an anachronism when the Toleration Act had been passed, and when Dissenters had been admitted to a certain degree of power. The day would come when the existence of this impost would be regarded as a political monstrosity, and the sooner it was got rid of the better it would be for the happiness of many communities, and the credit of the nation. He thought he had a right to call upon the Irish members to assist him in removing a grievance from which their constituents had been exempted, and he hoped all hon. members would consider the question upon its intrinsic merits. In conclusion he

would remark that until this question was settled there could be no marked line of distinction between Liberals and Conservatives. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. BUXTON seconded the motion. He was not so much influenced by either the expectation or the hope of their succeeding in abolishing Church-rates as by the desire, if possible, to obtain a compromise upon this subject before it was too late. No doubt, what had occurred last year was somewhat discouraging. There appeared then to be a very strong feeling on both sides of the House in favour of a fair compromise on this subject, and yet, after a great deal of negotiation, and after a most reasonable proposal had been made from the opposite side of the House, all proved to be of no avail, and nothing could be determined upon. But, in spite of that, he believed that every year both on the Conservative side and on the Liberal side there had been an increasing feeling that this was one of those questions which ought to be settled, not by violent action, but by a fair arrangement between both sides. (Hear, hear.) After discussing the various compromise schemes which had been put forward, he said the one that appeared to him to deserve most serious consideration was the proposal that the whole existing machinery should be maintained, but that no penalty should any longer attach to a refusal of payment. The objection to that proposal on the part of Churchmen appeared to be that in surrendering so much they would surrender all; but practically that would not be the case. The truth was, that in making that concession the Church would not give up any real tangible advantage, though she would give up that seeming power of compulsion which at present created great dissatisfaction and ill-will. (Hear, hear.) He urged the Government to bring forward a measure founded on such a principle. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. SOTHERON ESTCOURT would at once say that if no proposition for an arrangement was made on either side, it was because they could not agree upon any plan. He then reviewed the various measures that had been proposed on the subject—

The first proposition was, that the amount estimated to be raised by Church-rates should be paid out of the taxation of the country. The objections to that scheme were patent. The amount might be too much or too little; and next it was the substitution of a tax for a rate—a most vital point. (Hear, hear.) The late Government proposed a scheme of voluntary commutation, accompanied by a process of self-exemption. He had supported that scheme, but he confessed the addition of a scheme of self-exemption was a radical defect. (Hear, hear.) It would be impossible to carry out the plan without creating a distinction among the parishioners of Churchmen and Dissenters—a distinction that he was most anxious to avoid. (Hear, hear.) The parishioners ought to be regarded as a body of men with common rights—(hear, hear)—and that character would be destroyed if such a distinction were created. The next scheme to which he would refer was one proposed by the right hon. gentleman the Home Secretary—a system of pew-rents, which had been since urged upon the public attention in a pamphlet that had been widely circulated. To that plan there was the objection that it would establish an absolute property from the time in the floor of the church. (Sir G. C. Lewis made a gesture of dissent.) The right hon. gentleman did not appear to concur in that view, but if in return for a certain sum paid for keeping up the church a man was allowed a positive right of property to a particular seat, he had, for the time, a right to keep out others from that seat, which was at variance with the whole principle of an Established Church. The right hon. gentleman the Secretary for War had also brought forward a scheme, of which he should wish to hear some further explanation. He need not refer to the scheme of the hon. member for Birmingham, or the numerous other plans that had been proposed, but against each and all of which strong if not fatal objections had been urged.

These schemes had, he thought, failed because they were not founded upon a distinct, plain, and constitutional principle, but were mere expedients devised to get rid of a particular difficulty. He had himself attempted a sort of private negotiation with the hon. baronet, and had framed a scheme which was not accepted, and which he believed, could not have settled the matter. He thought we should deal with this question on principle, and in his view the sound principle was that you had a right to call upon the inhabitants of a parish, whatever their religious differences might be, to contribute to the support of that which was common property, and in which they had a common interest. (Hear, hear.) In his opinion, the first thing to be done was for the House to assent to his amendment, which would, of course, get rid of the bill. He assured the House that he had proposed this amendment, not with any intention of using it to achieve a result which might have been accomplished by a direct negative, but with a view to pass a substantive resolution upon which action might be based. That action ought to originate with the Government—(cheers);—because it was the Government alone which possessed sufficient influence to enable them to guarantee that a bill should go through committee substantially in the same shape in which it passed the second reading. If, however, the Government declined the responsibility of introducing a bill, and the matter thus fell into the hands of private members, he, for one, would not place another bill on the table of the House. There were four upon the table already, though not one had the smallest chance of passing; and these complicated the question, instead of clearing it up. Something, however, ought to be done, and he thought that the House should begin by endeavouring to ascertain some distinct principle upon which the majority agreed. (Hear, hear.) A resolution should be submitted with a view to test the opinion of the House; and, although exceedingly unwilling to give any pledge upon a question of this kind, he was resolved that if, by the fortune of war,

his amendment should be carried, he would follow it up with some proposal in the form of a substantive resolution. (Hear, hear.) The amendment which he now submitted appeared to him to be such that it was not open to dispute. He proposed—

That it is unjust and inexpedient to abolish the ancient customary right, exercised from time immemorial by the rate-payers of every parish in England, to raise by rate among themselves the sums required for the repair of their church, until some other provision shall have been made by Parliament for the discharge of those obligations to which, by custom or statute, the churchwardens, on the part of the parish, are liable.

If the House adopted his amendment, they would have an opportunity of fairly investigating the merit or demerit of the different charges upon Church-rates, and of afterwards making whatever provision appeared desirable.

Mr. MACDONOGH seconded the amendment.

Sir GEORGE C. LEWIS said that after looking at the measures brought in on this subject, any one who expected to practically settle this question must be very sanguine. Still it was admitted on all sides that the present state of the law was most unsatisfactory. In many parishes the rates were forced upon the reluctant minority, and collected from them by the power of the law. They had two measures before them—one to abolish Church-rates and to rely upon the voluntary system, the other to amend the law. He despaired of amending the law, as he understood if the amendment was carried the right hon. gentleman was prepared to submit to the House a substantive proposal for a change in the existing law.

Mr. S. ESTCOURT said he had recommended that any bill which might be introduced should be brought forward by the Government; but he had added that if the question were left to be dealt with by private members he would himself propose a substantive resolution.

Sir G. C. LEWIS presumed that such a resolution would not be confined to mere negations, but would include some definite plan. For himself, looking at the history of the twenty-three bills and at the course of the discussions in this House, he despaired of any such amendment being made while the present law continued, and therefore he was prepared without any hesitation to take the alternative of the voluntary system, and to vote now, as he had voted on former occasions, for the second reading of the bill. (Hear, hear.) He thought that the propositions made by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lords' committee went to establish the principle that Church-rates should be limited to members of the Establishment, or, at all events, to those who don't object to pay. (Hear.) He had himself proposed that, instead of assuming that every parishioner was a member of the Establishment, a list of persons attending the parish church should be drawn up, and that those only should be called on to pay the rate. This was, in fact, the same principle as the one adopted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the committee of the House of Lords, only it was applied in a different manner. They might say that a Church-rate founded upon attendance at church was, in fact, nothing more than a system of pew-rents (Hear); but he really could not understand on what the objection to pew-rents was founded. After discussing the objections to this plan, the right hon. gentleman proceeded to object to the amendment as inconsistent partly with fact, partly with the law. A great number of parishes refused rates, and the law did not enable any person to compel the churchwardens to make a rate where the majority of the vestry refused to do it. Therefore the terms of the resolution really amounted to nothing, and were perfectly nugatory and unmeaning, and those who intended to vote for it might save themselves the trouble of going into the lobby.

Mr. MACDONOGH said that the experience of Ireland would strongly confirm the principle of the amendment.

He contended that the "customary right" existed in every parish still, the difference being that between a right existing and a right not exercised. The Secretary for War said the right did not exist, because, practically, it had been discontinued in certain places.

Sir G. LEWIS.—What I said was, that the right did not exist, because it cannot be enforced. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. MACDONOGH.—The explanation was worse than the original statement. So, if the right hon. gentleman could not levy his rents, his right to them would not exist. (Laughter.)

Sir G. LEWIS.—I said it is not a legal right because it cannot be enforced by process of law. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. MACDONOGH.—Whichever way the proposition was phrased, it was not sustainable. Suppose the Income-tax were resisted in any locality for seven years, and the parties acquired an immunity for the wrong, could they then be told by a Minister of the Crown that the tax must be abolished, because it could not be levied in particular cases? ("Hear, hear," and "Oh!")

It was the duty of the Government to come forward and terminate the discussion that had lasted so long, and he hoped a majority in favour of the resolution would compel the Government to do its duty.

Mr. REMINGTON MILLS said that a bill was brought in some years ago by Mr. Spring Rice, charging the amount of the Church-rate on ecclesiastical property. If hon. gentlemen opposite would recur to the principle of that measure he believed they would not encounter much opposition. (Hear, hear.) He supported the bill on this ground.

It might be the common law that a Church-rate could be made by the majority of a parish; but the population of the country had outgrown the common law. (Hear, hear.) At the end of the 16th century there were 9,281 parishes in England, no doubt with as many churches. The population was 5,500,000; and he calculated, making some reduction on the gross number

of the population, that there was one church to every 320 persons. Taking the census of 1851, it appeared there were 14,000 churches in England; the population was 18,000,000; and making the same reduction on that number, there were now 1,270 persons demanding admittance to every church. The accommodation the church afforded had diminished three-fourths since the end of the 16th century. There were 10,000,000 persons for whom church accommodation ought to be provided; but the Church could only give that accommodation for 5,300,000. Consequently, there were 5,000,000 persons for whom there was no accommodation. The Church said it could not provide it; it could do nothing; it had no room. It was all very well to talk of common right, but common right meant common use, and if a man could not use it his common right was to little purpose. (Hear, hear.) With regard to Churchmen themselves, they were required to pay for churches which they never entered. Though churches had increased to the number of 14,000, only four-fifths of them were entitled to rates as parish churches, while the persons who attended the other one-fifth were compelled to pay for the maintenance of fabrics in which they could find no room. (Hear, hear.) The erection of all the district churches had done away with the obligation of the people who frequented them to pay for the parish churches. (Hear, hear.) The question before the House was one that could not be settled by simple composition. The right hon. gentleman thought that by putting a truism on the paper he was advancing the settlement of the question; but the only way to do that was to submit to the House a practical proposition. (Hear, hear.) There was another reason why the bill of the hon. baronet deserved support,—namely, that the question of Church-rates was the only one in which the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts extended over the laity of this country. (Hear, hear.) If any reasonable compromise could be effected, the House would do well to adopt it; but to abolish Church-rates altogether appeared to him the only safe constitutional course. (Hear.)

Captain BARTELOT supported the amendment. He said there was a reaction in favour of Church-rates, and that in towns of from 5,000 to 10,000 population, the opposition had decreased, and the rates were carried by large and increasing majorities. (Hear, hear.) In the country districts, Dissenters as well as Churchmen were willing to contribute, for they knew that they had not only been married in the parish church but that they would be buried in the churchyard. He then quoted Lord Russell's opinion in 1854.

Sir C. BURRELL (a new member) said a few words in support of the amendment.

Mr. BRIGHT then addressed the House as follows:—

It is interesting to the House, if not convincing, that the hon. gentleman who has just spoken should have read an extract from a speech of a late member of this House, now a member of the other House of Parliament, and should have adopted him as a great authority upon this question. I presume the hon. gentleman would not take Lord Russell's opinion upon a great many subjects;—(hear, hear)—and I presume he would admit that the opinion which Lord Russell holds in 1862 may be as wise as that which he held in 1854,—(Hear, hear)—inasmuch as rational opinions on questions of this nature may be assisted to a considerable extent by the experience which he has gained as he has advanced in life. (Hear, hear.) On the other hand, I should not be the least disappointed on finding the hon. gentleman, like other hon. gentlemen upon other questions, eight years hence admitting that he was wrong to-day, and that the abolition of Church-rates was a good measure. (Hear, hear.) We have had an hon. and learned member from Ireland speaking on this subject, and it is odd that the English Church has had frequent occasion to rely upon the advocacy of legal luminaries from Ireland. That hon. and learned gentleman tells us that a measure which reduced the number of bishops in Ireland, which abolished church cess, and which commuted first fruits, was a healing measure. (Hear, hear.) Well, I have no doubt it was, and that if it had been carried much further it would have been still more healing. (Cheers and laughter.) But, having that opinion of the measure which passed some twenty-five years ago in regard to Ireland, assuredly he need not have drawn such a gloomy picture of the wrong which would be done to the Established Church of this country if the bill now before the House were passed into law. (Hear.) I believe hon. gentlemen are acting in this matter, not as religious Churchmen but as political Churchmen, and that, unfortunately, this has become with them, in some sort, a party question. ("No, no.") You feel that it is a question of political supremacy as regards your Church. ("No, no.") Well, then, if you are not of that opinion, I can only say you have very little faith in the principles of your Church, and have gained very little from the experience of the last half-century with respect to the wonderful things which your Church can accomplish, if it be allowed to act from religious zeal and be not in any degree hampered and interfered with by the action of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman the member for Wiltshire has discussed this question as he always does, and, as every question that touches upon religion and conscience should be discussed—in a spirit the most moderate, the most friendly, and, as far as he can see, the most just. (Cheers.) But his justice has been shown in another particular also, for he has—I was going to say depreciated—but not only depreciated, but repudiated and rejected absolutely every scheme that any party has hitherto submitted to the House upon this subject. (Hear, hear.) I do not complain that he objects to the proposition of the hon. member for Tavistock. He objects even to his own measure; he says now that what he thought was a simple and admirable settlement of this question a year ago would be no settlement at all, and he admits that a bill which would not settle the matter finally would be of no value. (Hear, hear.) That being so, I do not think he gives the House good advice in asking it to adopt his proposition. (Hear.) I was amused by the reason which the right hon. gentleman

assigned for the failure of those bills. But if, in a case of medicine or mechanics, everything failed—as the right hon. gentleman's own bill failed, as the proposition of the hon. and learned member for Cambridge University failed, as those of the hon. member for North Warwickshire, of the late hon. member for Preston (Mr. Cross), of the right hon. gentleman the Home Secretary and half-a-dozen others all failed—then, I should say, there must be something radically wrong about the matter. (Hear, hear.) Either the remedies suggested would not meet the case, or the opponents would not agree to accept them, and therefore they failed. (Hear, hear.) But the right hon. gentleman says they failed because they were not founded on a constitutional principle, and he cited several legal opinions to show what was the constitutional right on this question. But nobody disputes about the constitutional right, which only means the legal right. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for Wycombe (Mr. R. Mills), who in a maiden speech put this question very properly before the House, says, though in language not quite exact, that the population has outgrown the state of things to which the right hon. gentleman referred. Is it because 800 or 500 years ago a certain practice or state of law existed it must therefore exist for ever?—(cheers)—for that is the question which is placed before us. We have had changes in almost every department of State and Government. The facts are altogether changed. What reason is there therefore that the law and practice should not change with the facts? (Hear, hear.) We have been for twenty-eight years discussing this question because the great majority of the people discovered that, though constitutional and legal, Church-rates were at variance with their true rights and interests. (Hear, hear.) I recollect the substance of a passage from a very excellent work—I think the *History of the Anglo-Saxons*—by the late Dr. Lingard, an historian of the Roman Catholic Church, and a man, I believe, of singular accuracy and impartiality. Dr. Lingard points out that in times past nothing could be more equitable, more just, or more proper in his view than the system of Church-rate as it then existed in the various parishes of England. But he says that the men who with exact justice in times past established that system by local organisation would, had they lived in our days, have repudiated it, because what was just and wise 700 or 800 years ago might not be just and wise when circumstances had undergone a complete change. (Hear, hear.) But I must call the attention of the right hon. gentleman to a phrase which he used which did not appear to me to have any very definite meaning. He speaks of the common interest which we have in the Church. I recollect a clergyman once asking me to subscribe for what he considered the ornamentation of his church—that is, for putting up some very curious and grotesque figures, which were to peep out from under the slates. (Laughter.) I told him I did not like to subscribe to places of worship which were to be handed over to the bishop, and that I had something else to do with the surplus funds I had. "But," said he, "we do something which you cannot deny to be of use. We keep the people quiet." Well, the right hon. gentleman says, that the Scriptures are read in the churches, and the principles of Christianity—I will admit if he chooses—faithfully preached. All this is done, and it is quite true that we have an interest that it should be done, but no more interest that it should be done in the parish church than in the Wesleyan chapel. (Hear, hear.) I fancy I know what the right hon. gentleman is communicating to the hon. baronet the member for Stamford at this moment. (Laughter.) (Mr. S. Estcourt was leaning over towards Sir S. Northcote, who sat beside him, as if for the purpose of making some comment on what they had just heard.) The right hon. gentleman is probably saying that we have citizen rights in the Established Church. (Cheers from the Opposition.) But, so far as the principle goes that the truth should be taught in every place of worship, that the highest sanction should be given to those teachings which are to regulate the conduct of the people, we have precisely the same interest that this should be done in the Church, as in the chapel, and no more. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman referred to the time of the Toleration Act, and spoke of it as a time when it was quite right—a natural right—that every man should be allowed legally to worship according to his conscience, or, as the right hon. gentleman expressed it, according to his fancy. Well, what do we want now? We want that the natural right of every man, not only to worship according to his conscience, but not to be mulcted for any particular form of worship which is not according to his conscience, may also be made legal. (Cheers.) What was the good of the Toleration Act if it amounted only to saying this, "Walk out of our church if you like; go to what chapel you like, but still you shall contribute to the support of a form of worship which you do not approve." (Hear, hear.) I say what we ask now is a certain complement of the Toleration Act, and if it was meet to legalise the "natural right" 170 years ago it is meet to legalise the other natural right which we now assert. (Cheers.) I ask hon. gentlemen opposite if they are afraid that Churchmen will not maintain their places of worship, wash surplices, keep their churches clean, and do everything which the most humble congregations of the Primitive Methodists in this country do for their chapels. (Hear, hear.) Will any hon. gentleman say that the party in this country which holds the bulk of the landed property, which boasts that it is the richest, which has the great seats of learning at its absolute disposal, which in both Houses of Parliament possesses paramount authority—will any hon. gentleman opposite stand up and say that the members of the Church with all this power and all this influence are not liberal enough to support it? (Loud cheers.) We do not want in the least to diminish the number of your churches or their usefulness. It gives to many men who are opposed to the views which Churchmen take on this question the greatest pleasure to see the voluntary activity which has been displayed on every side in your Church. (Hear, hear.) All that we want is that the voluntary action which has done so much in other departments should be allowed full play in regard to this particular department to which Church-rates have heretofore been applied. I recollect sitting on a committee some years ago, when my hon. friend the member for Leeds produced statistics to show what had been done by your Church chiefly in Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Your whole Church had been revolutionised in the space of fifty years, and that great change had been effected by virtue of the very principle which both in this House and out of it political Churchmen have constantly derided. Why is it, when

churches are rising up in all parts of the country, and the people come to them in greater numbers than heretofore, that you fear to trust them on this small matter of some 200,000*l.* or 250,000*l.* a-year, which by every kind of evil that can be conceived in a community you extort, or at least a portion of it, from those who are unwilling to pay? Now, I maintain that, as you have been obliged to admit very many measures to be right which in past years you have opposed, so there cannot be a doubt that five or six years after the passing of this bill you will acknowledge that you were wrong on this matter, as on others, and you will find that the whole breath of society in England and Wales will be purified by the change. (Hear, hear.) Now, I do not think that the resolution which the right hon. gentleman has submitted to the House is one which ought to be acceded to. I do not think that the House ought to have much confidence that he will be able to fulfil that which he undertakes to do. He has tried one measure. He was confident that it was a good one. He is now as confident that it was worth nothing, because, upon his own principle, no measure is worth anything which does not finally settle the question. (Hear, hear.) What is this resolution? It is only the old story put in a new shape—that we, the friends of the Church of England, do not intend to part with this levy of Church-rates until Parliament shall grant a substitute which shall be equal to it. (Cheers from the Opposition.) Well, that is honest. (Hear, hear.) But does the right hon. gentleman propose what will be in any degree a remedy for this grievance? Where can you get the 250,000*l.*? I hope somebody from the opposite side will get up and tell us. At one time it was proposed to be got from a better management of Church funds, but you rejected that proposition; then it was to be got out of the Consolidated Fund; but now the right hon. gentleman admits that he would rather have the bill of the hon. member for Tavistock than that he should come to this House and ask for a substitute. (Hear, hear.) Well, where, then, are you likely to get it? Every day, every year that this matter is held over, you get less and less from the Dissenters. You may get more from Churchmen, but I don't think you do, unless where Church-rates are abolished, and there I am told you get twice and three times as much. (Hear, hear.) And if any person should tell me they do not in any parish get enough, I would say, Abolish Church-rates, go to your own people, tell them everything which is likely to excite their zeal and enlist their sympathy, as you know so well how to do, and you will not be long without all you want. (Hear, hear.) If you had faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, you might remove the mountain of this difficulty at once. (Hear, hear.) I believe you cannot maintain this rate—that no theory of common interest in the Church will induce the Nonconformists of this country to continue to pay it. Some may pay it, but they will pay it with grudging, with no friendly feeling to your Church, and no advantage to your system. The right hon. gentleman thinks nothing of value but that which will finally settle this question. I appeal to him as an honest man whether he does not believe that not one of the propositions which have been submitted to the House, except that of the hon. member for Tavistock, can do anything material to settle this question? (Hear, hear.) There was one proposal which I made, and which, I believe, the right hon. gentleman was disposed to accept—and I believe if the right hon. gentleman and myself were appointed to settle the question we should not be long in submitting a satisfactory proposition to the House. (Laughter and cheers.) I judge so from opinions which the right hon. gentleman has often expressed. I proposed a very simple plan—it was not a plan of my own—I am not a discoverer—that you should leave everything as it is except the power of enforcing the rate. (Hear, hear.) I am not a Churchman, I have no enthusiasm for Churchmen or for the Church, but speaking honestly from my knowledge of the people of this country, I do not believe there is a single parish in the kingdom in which any difficulty would be found in raising by voluntary subscription as much as might be necessary for the services of the Church. (Hear, hear.) Let us get rid, if we can, of party feeling, of anxiety to have a party triumph. If you accept such a proposition as I make I would ask my hon. friend to withdraw his bill, and to substitute a clause which would take away the legal power of enforcing the rate; and I believe that next year and the year after the House would have a pleasant Session in anticipating that there was no Church-rate debate or division to come on (cheers and laughter); and the Church itself throughout the country would feel that it was placed in a stronger position, because religious and social harmony would not be interrupted by the broils which are incessantly taking place in connexion with this question. (Hear, hear.) Now, I tell the House and hon. members opposite that a greater question still is involved in this question. (Opposition cheers.) The right hon. gentleman is quite aware of that fact. (Hear, hear.) Every vestry meeting, every meeting of any kind which is held on this subject, becomes a school to teach a lesson which many persons may think pernicious, many may think advantageous, but which goes beyond the abolition of this tax. (Hear, hear.) The Liberation Society is a frightful object—I do not know whether in the nightly dreams, but, at all events, in the waking visions, of hon. gentlemen opposite. It has been greatly abused. (Hear, hear.) It is an honest society, with earnest men, working for what they believe to be good, and what they expect to be able to accomplish; and, therefore, however much you may abuse it, it is not to be despised. (Hear, hear.) But the Liberation Society can have at every meeting where this question is to be discussed some person competent to go into the general question of Church Establishments. (Hear, hear.) That is not a grievance to me. I am not an enthusiast in favour of the Established Church, and I can wait. But I am speaking now with an earnest desire to see the question settled on its own merits and in its own time, leaving all greater questions to that further discussion and deliberation—(ironical cries of "Hear, hear")—which an intelligent and Christian people will no doubt give to them. I have no difficulty in agreeing to the appeals which have been made to the Government in regard to this matter. I believe the Government are bound to take it up not merely because it is an important question in itself, but out of respect to that great party on this side of the House by whom alone they hold office. (Hear, hear.) It has been usual for years past for Governments to take almost every question into their hands at a certain period of their career, because

they were more able to effect a settlement than any private member. While, however, individual members have not become more potent to dispose of great questions, we have a Government which seems to get more and more indisposed to touch them. (Hear, hear.) I recollect that an hon. friend of mine who is not only a politician, but a wit, said of the Aberdeen Administration that it would go on well as long as it kept off politics. (Laughter.) That appears to me rather the course which is taken by the Government of the noble viscount. (Cheers.) There are two reasons why the Government should change its course on this subject. One of these is sure to have the sympathy of hon. gentlemen opposite. The right hon. gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire made a very remarkable speech last November. It was in the days of fog, and he attempted to clarify this great question. He never made a speech more remarkable or ingenious, and I would have given a good deal to see the countenance of the bishop who was on the platform listening to him. (Laughter.) But the right hon. gentleman did not confine his sympathy to the Church Establishment. His compassion was excited for members on his own side of the House. He complained that the country did not sufficiently support himself and his friends in their energetic and superhuman efforts to maintain Church-rates. He said that it was done only by a strain on the physical energies of those who repulsed the attack, which it was not in human nature to continue unless the country and Churchmen generally came forward to their assistance. At the moment when I read those words my mind's eye instinctively turned to the hon. member for Norfolk, whose physical energies never seem to fail in opposing anything. (A laugh.) To prevent the strain on those physical energies the Government ought to take up this subject. But on this side of the House we have a substantial grievance. I do not know how many members on this side will vote to-day against the bill—perhaps none; and certainly very few. I venture to say that there is no question which can be brought before the House—not even the question of want of confidence in the Government—which would unite a larger number of votes on this side of the House than the question before us. ("Hear, hear," and a laugh.) If it be so, if this be a question affecting the feelings of millions of people, and if all reasonable men (who, I hope, are still the majority) wish the question to be settled, then we on this side, and also hon. gentlemen opposite, have a right to call on the Government to take up the matter, to submit it to the House on some basis which may be acceptable to the great body of either party, and to do what the Government is always very unwilling to do, stake their existence on carrying the measure. (Hear, hear.) If the Government abjures politics altogether—(laughter)—if this question is only to be used in boroughs to return members to support the Government, as against Conservative candidates, and if the noble lord and his colleagues care nothing for its being carried, then I say they abdicate their functions as statesmen, and take their places on that bench as—what shall I say?—as a set of superior clerks. (Cheers and laughter.) I am anxious for the settlement of this question upon some principle so simple and so just that it shall recommend itself to the great body of the people and shall never invite further contention in this House. I believe that if hon. members opposite will only drop their feelings of hostility towards those whom they suppose to be assailing the supremacy of the Church, if they will look to that harmony which all religious sects should endeavour to cultivate, and to those great principles which are taught as much in their churches as in our own, they will come to the conclusion that there is in this question nothing which can make it worth while for the country and Parliament longer to debate about it. Twenty-eight years have not exhausted the attacks which are incessantly made against this odious and unjust impost. If you maintain it for twenty-eight years longer you will not drive off those who feel it their imperative duty to oppose it. Then, let us try to make famous a session in which nothing has been done hitherto but spending the money which is hardly gathered from the people, by allaying a source of constant irritation throughout the country, and by embodying in English law one of the plainest principles of the Gospel morality, that we should do to all our neighbours as we should wish them to do to us. (Loud cheers.)

Sir JOHN PAKINGTON said, in reply to Mr. Bright, that though Lord John Russell had changed his vote, he never changed his opinions—"Oh!"—at least, he never told the House that his views had undergone an alteration. (Hear, hear.) He was glad to hear from the hon. member for Birmingham a distinct declaration that he desired the settlement of this question. He also believed this question ought to be disposed of in some way or other, and that this annual debate and perpetual controversy should cease. Holding those views he heard the remarks of the right hon. baronet the War Secretary with surprise and regret. He asked what was the objection to pew-rents. It was that the Church ought to be free to every man. (Hear, hear.) The right hon. gentleman told them, moreover, that last year he had submitted to the House a plan for the solution of this question, and he still adhered to it. But why did not the Government of which he was a member take up that plan and present it to them? (Hear, hear.) What had been the main obstacles to the solution of this question? One was the violence manifested by a portion of the Dissenters, and the other was the tergiversation of certain eminent politicians in this House. (Hear, hear.) He had great respect for Protestant Dissenters, and believed that many of them were ready to contribute as individuals for the support of the Church. Some of the Dissenters, and especially those connected with the Liberation Society, have carried on the controversy with great acrimony towards the Church, and were open to the charge which the hon. member for Birmingham made very unjustly against them of offering insult to their opponents. ("No, no!" from Mr. Bright.)

To show the spirit and language of this section I will read a few lines from a high authority in the Dissenting ranks. Mr. Miall, in one of his published works, says:—

What we require is that when the present incumbent shall

depart this life the successor shall not be appointed, and that the funds should be sequestered to the use of the civil Government.

(Hear, hear.) The next extract is from the "Nonconformist's Sketch-Book," edited by the same gentleman:—

The Church of England is an image carved with marvellous cunning, tricked out in solemn vestments, a part woven by human fancy, a part stolen from the chest of truth—an image, we repeat, an outside semblance, a counterfeit. . . . empty, without heart, destitute of any well-spring of vitality. . . . kings, nobles, and bishops under the sanction, and on the behalf of their Church, perpetuate a thousand enormities, violate every maxim of religion, degrade, insult, harass, imprison—regard neither justice nor mercy in their pursuit of pelf. An attention to rites for the performance of which fees may be exacted—heartless formality—a blind, unreasoning, ignorant, superstitious obedience to the priesthood—payment of tithes, and Easter-offerings and Church-rates—these are the great objects of our Establishment. To shatter this image, and give the dust of it to the four winds of heaven . . . is the sacred mission of Protestant Dissenting ministers.

The *Christian's Penny Magazine*, edited by John Campbell, D.D., denounces the Church of England as "an engine of Satan to delude and deceive the people."

He then quoted the evidence given by Mr. Morley and Dr. Foster before the Lords' Committee to show their acrimony and extravagance. The measure proposed by the Government of which he was a member, honestly proposed to relieve conscientious scruples. It was rejected by the Dissenters, and from that moment the conscientious grievance was gone. (Hear, hear.) But the agitation was to be prolonged, and a new platform had to be sought.

The real ground of opposition was then disclosed. It was not relief from the payment of a rate which conscience disapproved, but the destruction of the Church which was desired. As a Churchman, I am not sorry that the Dissenters adopted this violent policy; for it has told against their own cause. It has opened the eyes of many Liberal members who formerly supported them to their ulterior designs, and has done probably more good than harm to the Church. But I regret it, because it has postponed a settlement.

To that result the tergiversation of certain political leaders has also contributed, and he was glad to see that the noble lord at the head of the Government had arrived in time to hear his remarks.

With deep respect for the noble lord, I must express my regret at the course which he himself, Lord Russell, and some other gentleman on that bench, have pursued on this subject. (Hear, hear.) I have no right to impute motives, but it certainly appears to me that the noble lords sacrificed the interests of the Church to the interests of party. (Hear, hear.) They changed their votes, but I never heard that they had changed their opinions. He, for one, as a member of that Church, should be happy at any moment to lend his humble aid to bring about a fair adjustment of that painful and difficult question.

Mr. DILLWYN, who spoke amid such loud and continuous cries of "Divide, divide!" that but few of his remarks were audible, said that although he should be glad to see her Majesty's Government come forward to settle this question, yet they did not receive much encouragement to undertake such a task; for how could they be expected to reconcile the differences of hon. members opposite when they could not reconcile them themselves; in addition to which it must be borne in mind that most of their supporters were opposed to any compromise and in favour of the total and immediate abolition of Church-rates. (Hear, hear.) Last year the right hon. gentleman the member for Buckinghamshire promised that, if the bill for the abolition of Church-rates were defeated, he and his friends would bring in some measure to settle this question. No such compromise as was promised had been produced, and therefore on this subject the Conservatives had been guilty of as great a breach of faith as that which had been committed by the Government with regard to Reform. ("Divide! divide!")

Mr. DISRAELI declared Mr. Dillwyn's imputations quite undeserved. To his mind, the long agitation of this question, which had been the subject of bills proposed by Whig and Tory Governments in vain, was a proof that the question was not ripe for settlement, or that the pretext for legislation was not the sole object of the desired settlement. The ulterior object had been avowed, the separation of the Church from the State. If this had not been the case, it would have been a slur upon the House, as the most practical assembly in the world, that after twenty-eight years of agitation—after twenty-three measures, some brought forward by the Government of two great parties in the country, it had not advanced one jot. He affirmed that the Conservatives had fulfilled their undertaking to bring in a measure. They had done so, but it was not acceptable. He was of opinion, with the hon. member for Birmingham, that this was a question which ought to engage the attention of the Government. He, however, found that all great questions were now in the hands of private members; but this question was the only one in which the Government affected an interest, for a member of the Government had presided at the meeting of the Liberation Society. (Laughter.) This was intended as a compliment, no doubt, and as an indication of their future policy. The member of the Government was not a Cabinet Minister, but he was a Minister well acquainted with Cabinet secrets. (Renewed laughter.) The Secretary of State for War did indicate a plan. He did not say that her Majesty's Government were prepared to adopt it, but he did indicate a plan which he recommended as worthy of all attention; and it was, he said, the plan of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He had great veneration for the Archbishop, but that was not a question to be decided, as the right hon. gentleman seemed to think, by the weight of the opinions of prelates. The question of Church-rates was not a clerical question,—it was a popular question, a question of popular right, the right of

the popular voice to decide by the voice of a majority on the ancient and constitutional manners of this country. Then, they had been told that the people of England had outgrown the common law. The hon. member for Wycombe, who uttered that remarkable opinion, might represent the Liberation Society, but did not represent, he hoped, the opinions of a single person in the county of Bucks. They had now found out what was the clear issue which was to be decided:—

You have at stake, in the division which is instantaneously impending, some of the greatest objects and some of the most important principles which can engage the attention of Englishmen. You have at stake the principle of an Established Church, the principle of the local government, and the hereditary privileges of the great mass of the population. (Hear, hear.) That is the issue before the House. Upon that, and upon that alone, we are going to divide, and to that division I go with greater confidence than I ever before went into the lobby. (Loud cheers.)

Sir J. TRELAUNY having replied, the House went to a division, which we have described in a previous column.

THE DIVISION.

AYES, 286.

Acton, Sir J. Adair, H. E. Adam, W. P. Adams, H. J. Agar-Ellis, L. G. Agnew, Sir A. Alcock, T. Andover, Visct. Angerstein, W. Antrous, E. Ashley, Lord Atherton, Sir W. Ayton, A. S. Bagwell, J. Bailey, C. Baines, E. Ball, E. Barnes, T. Bass, M. T. Baxter, W. E. Bazley, T. Beale, S. Beamish, F. B. Beaumont, W. B. Beaumont, S. A. Bellow, R. M. Berkeley, H. F. Berkeley, Col. Berkeley, C. P. Biddulph, Col. Black, Adam. Blencowe, J. G. Bonham-Carter, J. Bouverie, E. P. Bouverie, P. P. Brand, H. Bright, J. Briscoe, J. I. Bristol, A. R. Brookhurst, J. Brown, J. Bruce, H. A. Buckley, Gen. Bulkeley, Sir R. Buller, Sir A. Butler, C. S. Buxton, C. Caird, J. Calthorpe, F. H. Cardwell, E. Carnegie, C. Cavendish, W. Childers, H. C. Cholmeley, Sir M. Clay, James. Clifford, C. C. Clifford, Col. Clifton, Sir R. Clive, G. Cobden, R. Cogan, W. H. Colebrooke, Sir T. Collier, R. P. Conningham, W. Cowper, W. Cox, W. Crauford, E. H. Crawford, R. W. Crossley, F. Dalglish, R. Davey, R. Davie, Sir H. R. Davie, Col. F. Denman, G. Dent, J. D. Dillwyn, L. L. Divett, E. Dodson, J. G. Doulton, F. Duff, M. E. Duff, R. W. Dunbar, Sir W. Dundas, F. Dundas, Sir D. Dunlop, A. M. Egerton, E. C. Ellice, E. Elphinstone, Sir J. Enfield, Visct. Euston, Earl of Evans, Sir D. L. Evans, T. W. Ewart, W. Ewart, J. C. Ewing, H. E. Fenwick, H. Fermoy, Lord

Finlay, A. S. Fitzwilliam, C. W. Foley, H. W. Forster, C. Forster, W. E. Foster, W. O. Fortescue, F. D. Fortescue, C. S. Freeland, H. W. Gavin, Major Gibson, T. M. Gilpin, C. Glyn, G. G. Glyn, G. G. Goldsmith, Sir F. H. Gower, F. L. Greene, J. Greenwood, J. Gregory, W. H. Gregson, S. Grenfell, C. P. Greville, Col. Grey, Sir G. Grosvenor, Earl Grosvenor, Lord R. Gurney, S. Hadfield, G. Hanbury, R. Hankey, T. Harcourt, J. A. Hartington, Mar. of Hayter, Sir W. G. Headlam, T. Henley, Lord Herbert, H. A. Hervey, Lord A. Hibbert, J. T. Hodgkinson, G. Hodgson, K. D. Horam, E. Howard, C. W. Hutt, W. Jackson, W. Jervoise, Sir J. C. Johnstone, Sir J. Kershaw, J. King, P. J. Kinglake, A. W. Kinglake, J. A. Kingscote, C. Kinnaird, A. F. Knatchbull-Hugessen, E. Langston, J. A. Langton, W. H. Lanigan, J. Lawson, W. Layard, A. H. Leatham, E. A. Lee, W. Lewis, Sir G. C. Lindsay, W. S. Locke, J. Lowe, R. Lisle, W. J. M'Call, J. MacEvoy, E. Mackie, J. Mackinnon, W. Mackinnon, W. M'Mahon, J. F. Maguire, P. Majoribanks, D. C. Marsh, M. H. Marshall, W. Martin, P. W. Martin, J. Massey, W. N. Matheson, A. Mildmay, H. F. Mills, T. Mills, J. R. Milnes, R. M. Mitchell, T. A. Moffatt, G. Moncrieff, J. Monnell, W. Monson, W. J. Morris, D. Morrison, W. Norris, J. T. North, F. O'Brien, P. O'Connell, Captain O'Connor Don, the O'Ferrall, R. M. Ogilvy, Sir J.

Oatlow, G. O'Reilly, M. W. Osborne, R. B. Padmore, R. Paget, C. Palmerston, Visct. Paxton, Sir J. M. Peto, Sir S. M. Pigott, Sir J. M. Pilkington, J. Pollard - Urquhart, W. Ponsbury, A. Portman, W. Potter, E. Powell, W. T. Powell, J. J. Proby, Lord Pryse, E. L. Pugh, D. Ramsden, Sir J. W. Raynham, Visct. Ricardo, O. Robert, T. J. Robertson, D. Roebuck, J. A. Rothschild, Baron L. M. Russell, H. Russell, A. Russell, F. W. Russell, Sir W. St. Aubyn, J. Salomons, Ald. Scholefield, W. Scott, Sir W. Scrope, G. P. Seely, C. Seymour, Sir M. Seymour, H. D. Seymour, W. D. Shafto, R. D. Shelley, Sir J. V. Sheridan, H. B. Sidney, T. Smith, J. B. Smith, M. T. Smith, Augustus. Smith, Sir F. Somerville, Sir W. Staurope, W. Staniland, M. Stanley, Lord Stansfeld, J. Steel, J. Stuart, Col. Sykes, Col. Talbot, C. R. Taylor, P. A. Thompson, H. S. Tite, W. Tollemache, F. J. Tomline, G. Traill, G. Turner, J. A. Tynte, Col. Vane, Lord H. Verney, Sir H. Villiers, C. P. Vivian, H. H. Vyner, R. A. Waldron, L. Walter, J. Warner, E. Watkins, Col. Weguelin, T. M. Wemyss, J. H. Westhead, J. P. Whalley, G. H. Whitbread, S. White, J. Wickham, H. W. Willcox, B. M. G. Williams, W. Willoughby, Sir H. Wood, Sir C. Wynne, C. G. Wyvill, M.

NOES, 257.

Adderley, C. B. Annesley, Col. Anson, Major Arbuthnot, Gen. Archdall, Capt. Astell, J. H. Baillie, H. J. Baring, A. H. Baring, H. B. Baring, T. Barrow, W. H. Barttelot, Col. Bathurst, A. A. Bathurst, F. H. Beach, W. W. Bective, Earl of Beecroft, G. S. Bentinck, G. W. Bentinck, G. C. Benyon, R. Beresford, W. Bernard, Col. Bernard, T. T. Blackburn, P. Bond, J. W. Booth, Sir R. G. Botfield, B. Bovill, W. Bramley-Moore, J. Bramston, T. W. Bridges, Sir B. W. Brooks, R. Bruce, Lord E. Bruce, Major C. Bruce, Sir H. H. Bruen, H. Burghley, Lord Burrell, Sir P. Butler, J. H. Cairns, Sir H. M. C. Cartwright, Col. Cave, S. Cavendish, Lord G. Cecil, Lord R. Chapman, J. Churchill, Lord A. S. Clive, Capt. C. Bold, J. O. Cochrane, A. D. Cole, H. Cole, J. L.

Coles, H. B. Conolly, T. Corry, H. L. Cubitt, G. Curzon, Visct. Dalkeith, Earl of Damer, S. D. Dawson, R. P. Deedes, W. Diaradi, B. Du Cane, C. Duncombe, A. Duncombe, W. E. Dunne, Col. Du Pré, C. G. Dutton, H. R. East, Sir J. B. Edwards, Major Egerton, Sir P. G. Egerton, A. F. Egerton, W. Elcho, Lord Estcourt, T. H. Fane, Col. Farquhar, Sir M. Farrer, J. Fellowes, E. Fergusson, Sir J. Filmer, Sir E. Fitzgerald, W. R. Forde, Col. Forrester, Col. Forster, Sir G. Franklin, G. W. Gallway, Sir W. P. Gallway, Visct. Gard, R. S. George, J. Getty, S. G. Gilpin, Col. Gladstone, Capt. Gladstone, W. Goddard, A. L. Gore, J. R. Gore, W. R. Graham, Lord W. Grey, Capt. Greenall, G. Grey de Wilton, Vis. Griffith, C. D. Grogan, Sir E. Gurney, J. H. Haliburton, T. C. Hamilton, Lord C. Hamilton, J. H. Hamilton, Major Hamilton, Visct. Hardy, G. Hardy, J. Hartopp, E. B. Hassard, M. Hay, Sir J. C. Heathcote, Sir W. Heathcote, G. H. Henley, J. W. Henniker, Lord. Hesketh, Sir T. G. Hergate, Sir F. W. Hill, Lord A. E. Hill, R. C. Hodgson, R. Holford, R. S. Holmesdale, Visct. Hood, Sir A. A. Hope, G. W. Hopwood, J. T. Hornby, W. H. Horsfall, T. B. Hotham, Lord

Howes, E. Hubbard, J. G. Humbleton, P. Hume, W. W. Hunt, G. W. Ingestre, Visct. Jermyn, Earl Jervis, Capt. Johnson, Capt. Jolliffe, Sir W. G. Jones, D. Kekewich, S. T. Kelly, Sir F. Kendall, N. Kennard, R. W. Kerrison, Sir E. C. King, J. K. Knatchbull, W. F. Knight, F. W. Knightley, R. Knox, Col. Knox, Major Lacon, Sir E. Laird, J. Leader, N. P. Leake, Sir H. Lefroy, A. Legh, Major Legh, W. H. Leighton, Sir B. Lennox, Lord G. G. Lennox, Lord H. G. Leslie, C. P. Leslie, W. Lever, J. O. Liddell, H. G. Lindsay, Gen. Long, W. Longfield, R. Lopes, Sir M. Lovaine, Lord Lowther, Col. Lowther, Capt. Lyall, G. Lygon, F. Lytton, Sir G. E. Macaulay, K. Macdonogh, F. Mainwaring, T. Malins, R. Manners, Lord J. Maxwell, Col. Miles, Sir W. Miller, T. J. Mills, A. Milford, W. T. Montague, Lord R. Montgomery, Sir G. Moody, C. A. Mordaunt, Sir C. Morgan, O. Morgan, Major Morritt, W. J. Mowbray, J. R. Mundy, W. Mure, D. Murray, W. Naas, Lord Newdegate, C. N. Newport, Visct. Noel, W. Noel, G. J. North, Col. Northcote, Sir S. H. O'Hara, C. W. Packe, C. W. Packe, Col. Pakenham, Col.

Pakington, Sir J. Palk, Sir L. Palmer, R. W. Palmer, Sir R. Papillon, P. O. Parker, Major Patten, Col. Paul, H. Peacocke, G. M. Peel, Sir R. Peel, Gen. Pennant, Col. Pevensey, Visct. Phillips, J. H. Phillips, G. L. Potts, G. Powys, P. L. Puller, C. W. Quinn, P. Repton, G. W. Richardson, J. Ridley, Sir M. W. Rogers, J. J. Rolt, J. Rowley, R. T. Salt, Thomas Solater-Booth, G. Scott, Lord H. Selwyn, C. J. Seymour, H. K. Shirley, E. P. Smith, M. Smith, Abel. Smith, S. G. Smollett, F. P. Somerset, Col. Somes, J. Spooner, R. Stanhope, J. B. Stanhope, Lord Stirling, W. Stewart, Sir M. R. Stuart, Lt-Col. Stracey, Sir H. Sturt, H. G. Talbot, W. C. Tempest, Lord Thornhill, W. P. Thynne, Lord E. Tollermeade, J. Torrains, R. Tottenham, C. Trefusis, C. H. Trollope, Sir J. Turner, C. Vane, J. Vansittart, W. Verner, Sir W. Walcott, Admiral Walker, J. R. Walpole, S. H. Walsh, Sir J. Watlington, J. W. Way, A. E. Welby, W. E. Whiteside, J. Williams, Col. Wood, B. T. Wyndham, H. Wyndham, P. Wynn, Col. Wynn, W. W. Yorke, E. T.

PAIRS.

FOR. Mr Foljambe. Mr Esmond. Lord Dunkellin. Mr Merry. Mr T. Baring. Mr Dunne. Sir T. Burke. Mr Pease. Colonel Pinney. Mr Cobbett. Sir J. Duke. Colonel French. Mr Corbally. Mr Ingham. Colonel Ferguson. Mr Wild.

AGAINST. Mr Close. Mr R. Long. Sir W. Wynn. Sir W. Colington. Colonel Sturt. Captain Bunbury. Colonel Dickson. Mr Collins. Colonel Smyth. Mr F. Peel. Mr Hope Johnstone. Lord Elmley. Mr Hennessy. Mr Gordon. Captain Jolliffe. Hon. C. H. Lennox.

ANALYSIS.

For the bill . . . 288 } 304
Pairs . . . 16 }
Against the bill . . . 289 } 305
Pairs . . . 16 }
Absent Liberals . . . 38
Conservatives . . . 6
Speaker . . . 1
654

VOTED FOR AMENDMENT.

Ayes . . . 288
Noes . . . 271

17

It will thus be seen that as many as 609 members of the House either voted or paired on the bill.

From the lists we subjoin it will be seen that the absentees included 38 Liberals and but 6 Conservatives. The number of Conservatives voting for the bill was 9, while the Liberals voting against it numbered 13, among whom were three members of the Government—Mr. Gladstone, the Solicitor-General, and Sir Robert Peel. Another member of the Government, Mr. F. Peel, paired against the bill. The absent members of the Government were Lords Bury and Castlerosse, who were accidentally away, and Lord A. Paget, who never votes on the question.

LIBERALS ABSENT UNPAIRED.

Arnott, Sir John . . . Kinsale.
Baring, F. T. . . Portsmouth.
Blake, John . . . Waterford.
Bowyer, Sir G. . . Dundalk.
Brady, John . . . Leitrim.
Browne, Lord J. . . Mayo County.
Buchanan, W. . . Glasgow.
Buller, J. W. . . Devon, N.
Bury, Viscount . . . Wick, W.
Butt, Isaac . . . Youghal.
Calcott, F. . . Clare.

* Including Tellers.

Castlerosse, Lord . . . Kerry.
Clinton, Lord R. (ill) . . . Nottingham, N.
Coke, W. . . Norfolk, E.
Eaton, John (abroad) . . . Athlone.
Garnett, W. J. . . Lancaster.
Gifford, Earl of (ill) . . . Totnes.
Gordon, B. . . Norfolk, W.
Handley, John . . . Newark.
Hammer, Sir J. . . Flint.
Holland, E. (family affliction) . . . Evesham.
Levinge, Sir R. . . Westmeath.
Lyons, Dr. (ill) . . . Cork.
Matheson, Sir J. . . Ross, &c.
Miller, W. . . Leith.
O'Donoghue, The (ill) . . . Tipperary.
Owen, Sir Hugh . . . Pembroke, &c.
Paget, Lord A. . . Lichfield.
Pritchard, J. . . Bridgnorth.
Redmond, J. E. . . Wexford.
Ricardo, J. L. (ill) . . . Stoke.
Scully, V. (ill) . . . Cork County.
Slaney, R. A. (ill) . . . Shrewsbury.
Stanley, W. O. . . Beaumaris.
Sullivan, M. . . Kilkenny.
Vernon, H. F. . . Worcester, E.
Wood, Western . . . City of London.
Wrightson, W. B. . . Northallerton.

LIBERALS VOTED AGAINST THE BILL.

Anson, Major . . . Lichfield.
Baring, H. B. . . Marlborough.
Bruce, Lord E. . . Ditto.
Cavendish, Lord G. . . Bucks.
Churchill, Lord . . . Woodstock.
Gladstone, W. . . Oxford U.
Gurney, S. . . Lynn.
Heathcote, G. H. . . Rutland.
Packe, Colonel . . . Lincolnshire.
Palmer, Sir R. . . Richmond.
Peel, Sir R. . . Tamworth.
Fuller, C. W. . . Herts.
Thornhill, W. . . Derbyshire.

Conservatives absent: W. T. Copeland, J. S. Drax, James Gaskell, Edward Greaves, D. S. Ker, Colonel Vandeleur.

Conservatives voted for the bill: Crawshaw Bailey, Edward Ball, E. C. Egerton, Sir J. Elphinstone, W. T. Powell, David Pugh, Lord Stanley, Sir H. Willoughby, Charles Wynne.

According to the division list the numbers on Mr. Estcourt's amendment were—ayes, 257; noes, 272. These numbers, it will be seen, differ from those which were read to the House by the teller, which were—ayes, 288; noes, 271. The corrected figures leave a difference of 14 between the minority in favour of Sir J. Trelawny's bill and the minority against Mr. Estcourt's amendment. The absence of the following members from the second division accounts for this difference:—Mr. Adeane, Agar Ellis, C. Bailey, E. Ball, Hon. C. P. Berkeley, Sir J. Elphinstone, Hon. C. Howard, M. Milnes, Sir J. Paxton, F. W. Russell (Limerick), Sir F. Smith, Mr. Augustus Smith, J. Walter, C. G. Wynne (Carnarvon). Some of these were unintentionally absent. Mr. H. B. Baring (Marlborough) voted against Sir J. Trelawny's bill, but was absent on the second division. Mr. H. F. Vernon was absent from the division on the bill, but gave a vote for Mr. Estcourt's amendment.

DIVISIONS ON THE CHURCH-RATE ABOLITION BILL.

Year.	Occasion.	For.	Against.	Total.
1854	Second reading . . .	182	209	395
1855	Ditto . . .	217	189	410
1856	Ditto . . .	221	178	403
1858	Ditto . . .	213	160	377
	Third reading . . .	266	203	473
1859	First session, 2nd reading . . .	242	168	414
	Second session, ditto . . .	263	193	460
1860	Second reading . . .	263	234	501
	Third reading . . .	235	226	465
1861	Second reading . . .	281	266	551
	Third reading . . .	274	274	552
1862	Second reading . . .	236	287	577

This table shows that the abolitionists, notwithstanding they were on Wednesday in a minority of one, have not lost any votes, but, on the contrary, had five more votes than on the second reading last year, and twelve more than on the third; the number voting on Wednesday for abolition being the largest yet reached.

THE PRESS AND THE CHURCH-RATE DEBATE.

The *Times* writes in its old strain respecting last Wednesday's struggle. It asserts that the only effect of the victory will be that the House of Lords will be deprived of a day's customary amusement, and several Bishops and High Church lay Peers will have to tie up with red tape, and to deposit in their secretaries, some valuable bundles of memoranda and statistics for use next Session. The principle asserted by this majority of one is, that in certain places and parishes, comprising, perhaps, half the population of the country, a similar majority may, if it is so minded, authorise a parish officer to compel any householder to contribute a few shillings a-year to the maintenance of the Church. It is the dependence on Church-rates that has done more mischief than anything to our churches.

A miserable pittance, screwed out of the pockets of reluctant farmers and shopkeepers, has been spent in jobs, under the direction of ignorant churchwardens, who have blazoned their shame on the front of the organ gallery, and acquired the credit of the most debased style of architecture even invented. So certain is a church dependent on Church-rates, however duly collected, to fall into this condition, that when people are

* Tellers included.

ashamed of the condition of their church they excuse themselves by observing, "You know ours is only a Church-rate church." Indeed, any one can tell at a glance whether a church depends on the churchwardens and the rates, or has fallen into more liberal and more enlightened hands.

The debate, says the *Times*, took a turn of its own and that turn was followed with unusual determination on both sides.

The question really treated was whether the Church of England has such a foundation in truth and such a hold on the affections of its members as to be able or likely to thrive and to maintain its edifices without the compulsory powers of the law. It might be supposed that on this point good Churchmen would answer at once that the Church could and would take care of itself, and needed not the arm of the law; while Dissenters or persons with a leaning that way, would expect to see her fall when the props were removed. Strange to say, yesterday these parts were reversed. Sir J. Pakington and Mr. Disraeli avow themselves decidedly of opinion that the Church of England has no other substance or strength than what the law of the land gives it; that it is a mere system of defensive works, and that when the parishes in which Church-rates are now collected have no longer the power of compelling their payment, that outwork once taken, all the rest will follow, and the Church must come to an end. According to their estimate of the case, it is scarcely possible for an institution to rest on so frail a basis as the Church of England; for its whole and sole basis, in their view, is the legal power of the majority of the Vestry in certain parishes to levy rates for the maintenance of the Church. That Mr. Disraeli should entertain that notion of the Church of England is not so surprising, but we have a right to ask where Sir J. Pakington got it. We must consider it by far the grossest insult that the Church of England has received in these days. Even Mr. Estcourt's protest for the principle of the Church-rate, reduced to its lowest possible figure, as the embodiment of the Church's hold and claim on every soul in this kingdom, has some grace and faith in it. The man who takes this line at all events believes that the Church has something better to lean upon than vestries and rates. But what are we to say, or to think, of the unblushing avowal, by the self-constituted champions of the Church, that she must go to the dogs as soon as Parliament compels her to solicit subscriptions instead of demanding them by the threat of distress and imprisonment? Are these gentlemen in earnest when they tell us that ours is indeed a Parliamentary Church?

The *Daily News* says that people and nations whom we have been in the habit of pitying for their backward political condition will smile as they observe how careful we are to preserve relics of the old intolerance amongst our liberty. Indeed, in these days of new constitutions we shall have to move on, or very soon England and Spain will be the only countries in Christendom where such things can be talked of. The majority in favour of Mr. Estcourt's resolution no more contributes to a settlement than an equal majority in favour of repealing the Reform Bill would do.

The *Morning Star* says:—"It is surely time that such a strife should cease. A Ministerial measure, embodying the conciliatory suggestion which Mr. Bright repeated on Wednesday, would be supported by the whole of the Liberal party, and might be accepted by the Opposition without the slightest sense of ignoble acquiescence."

For what earthly purpose, says the *Daily Telegraph*, does the High Tory party defend a cess which costs them all this dangerous outery, and the downright menace of half the House of Commons, and two-thirds of the country? Simply because it sees, or thinks it sees, the principle of a State-Church bound up with this rate; and it fights for the outworks that it may not lose the citadel. It may be wrong or right, but there is a generalship which wins by yielding. This was certainly not the time to irritate the popular mind against what may be just by dogged defence of what is palpably unjust. From the House of Commons the contest must now pass into a hundred vestries, where it will be waged without much respect to the limit for debate. The adoption of Mr. Estcourt's motion is virtually a refusal of compromise, and an advance to the original position on the part of the pro-rate faction; and their antagonists are only too sure not to shirk this unwise challenge to a war without quarter.

The *Tory Standard* coarsely exults over the defeat of the Abolitionists, and indulges in the following rabid remarks:—

The whole history of their cause is disgraceful to them and to their associates. It is a history of fraud and falsehood, of systematic and wilful perversion of truth, misstatement of facts, misrepresentation of principles. It is a history of deceit, trickery, and concealment beyond parallel in the annals of political conflict, practised for a purpose as obviously at variance with plain morality as we believe it to be hostile to the interests of true religion. It is a history of meanness, tergiversation, and unprincipled desertion of promises, pledges, and convictions, without precedent even in the records of Whig mutability.

The *Globe* says the numbers voting on both sides yesterday are the largest in the record of the divisions on this question, and they represent a maximum of effort. That it will remain a stock subject of agitation none can doubt; that agitation on the question is not desirable even Mr. Disraeli would hardly dispute. Under these circumstances, surely prudence loudly calls upon all the true friends of the Church to devise and carry a measure of compromise as speedily as possible.

The *Spectator* declares for Mr. Bright's plan of settlement:—

"Leave," he says, "everything as it is, but strike off the power of compelling payment." This is really a most complete solution. We say it, not unaware that we have proposed a better solution of our own, which, like the other twenty-three, has not yet met with the enthusiastic gratitude of the public. Still, if we cannot sacrifice pet solutions, how can we reproach the various

political parties for their obstinacy? The fact is, that Mr. Bright's is better, exactly because it leaves a false appearance of victory to both sides, which seems to be the high aim of both parties. The Tory will still have the exterior semblance of legal right for his Church-rate, the Radical will have the consolation of looking up the secret that he is really acting on principle in his own breast. On the other hand, the Tory will waive the right to punish disobedience while keeping up manfully the form of demanding compliance, and the Radical will waive the satisfaction of formally degrading the Church to a level with the other sects, while keeping up manfully the attitude of repulsing persecution. Thus, each gains all that in fact he cares for—the representative Church party having long ago disclaimed any wish to insult conscientious scruples, and the representative Dissenter having long ago disclaimed any wish seriously to injure the Church. Moreover, the plan draws no distinction between Churchmen and Dissenters; the man who refuses one year to pay may resume his position the next without any show of logical inconsistency, and the parishes which now refuse rates will probably grant them again so soon as it is clearly understood that no one can be legally compelled to pay.

The *London Review* takes similar ground:—

We think it is a matter for regret that some disposition was not shown on Wednesday night to meet in some way or other Mr. Bright's proposal to withdraw the bill, and substitute a clause which would take away the legal power of enforcing the rate. We are convinced that this is the only mode of compromise which the Dissenters will accept, and we regret that the opportunity was not seized to adopt this proposal. It would have given dignity to a session which promises to be, without any exception, the most barren in results of any session within the memory of living man. . . . The Conservatives have, on several memorable occasions which it is needless to specify, eaten their own words and refuted their own arguments. We are confident they will do so finally on this question also. Meanwhile, Mr. Bright deserves credit for his able speech, in which he so candidly recognised the sterling and good qualities of our great national Church, and his keen appreciation of her strength and stability. His estimate of her powers and energies puts to the blush the timidity and despair of those who call themselves her sons, but who underrate the power and the resources of the great parent which has nurtured them and reared them to manhood.

The *Economist* says:—"Mr. Bright has appeared in the doubly novel character of a peace-maker, and a very judicious peace-maker," and pronounces his plan to have "the merit of doing what is wanted, and no more than is wanted."

The *Saturday Review* rather describes in characteristic fashion the debate than comments upon it, but praises Mr. Bright's speech as moderate and telling, and speaks of the second division as giving "a supplementary kick to the carcass of the defunct bill."

The *Press* (Conservative) gives a history of the Abolition Bill to show how great has been the Parliamentary reaction, and believes that the intelligence of this country has weighed Abolition in the balance and found it wanting.

It is not therefore the result only of last Wednesday's debate on which we congratulate our readers, but the evident mode in which that result has been obtained; not merely on the victory which the Church has won, but on the powerful ally whom she has now, we hope, finally secured.

The *Record* says it is evident the Abolitionist cause is not making progress, and asks what the parishes have done that the right of levying Church-rates should be taken away from them:—"Every shilling of the money voted, amounting in the aggregate to some 250,000*l.*, is devoted directly or indirectly, under the supervision of the parishioners themselves, to the cause of religion and the benefit of the community." "Supposing even some Dissenters really entertain a conscientious objection to the payment of the tax, this would be no argument, we tell them, against Church-rates. If it be, it is a very vicious one, for it goes to make all taxation impossible, and sets up a principle destructive of society itself." It may be quite true, as Mr. Bright and the *Times* affirm, that the Church could do without Church-rates, but that is not the point, and they know it:—

There is something of greater importance at stake on the Abolition Bill than so many thousand pounds a year, and they must not be surprised, therefore, if Churchmen decline to accept their advice on a matter which they evidently but little understand. Meanwhile, we exceedingly regret the position assumed by the Government on this question. Lord Palmerston's name stands amongst the supporters of Sir John Trelawny's spoliation bill. The proposition made by Sir G. C. Lewis, to form a register of persons attending the church, and to levy the rate upon them, is simply ludicrous, being in itself absolutely impracticable; while, could it be carried into effect, it would be a positive premium against going to Church. These two facts leave little hope that the Government will take up the question; or if they do, that any measure would emanate from them which it would be possible for the Church of England to accept.

MR. WESTERN WOOD, M.P. for the City, in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, most emphatically denies having at any time during the course of his contest pledged himself to vote for the abolition of Church-rates, or having receded from his original position with reference to that question.

The extent of what I said on this subject went to this—that if at any future time I saw reason to change my views, I should have no false hesitation in admitting and acting upon them.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to add, that my great object, for the sake of the Church, is to obtain a final settlement of the Church-rate question, and it was because no substantive proposition for that object, excepting unqualified abolition, to which I have always been opposed, was submitted to the House of Commons, that I abstained from voting in a division which, terminating as it might, could in my view lead to no practical result in that respect.

Religious Anniversaries.

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

On Thursday, the sixty-eighth annual meeting of this society was held in Exeter-hall. Notwithstanding the very unfavourable state of the weather—the rain falling in torrents the whole day—the hall was nearly filled, and the platform was as usual crowded by the leading ministerial and lay friends of the society. Amongst those present were Lord Radstock, chairman; Mr. Kershaw, M.P., Mr. Hadfield, M.P., Mr. E. Baines, M.P., the Rev. Dr. Tidman, Dr. Morton Brown, Dr. Ferguson, Dr. Thompson, of Edinburgh; Dr. James R. Campbell, of Bradford; G. Smith, J. Kennedy, T. W. Aveling, J. G. Miall, J. Graham, J. P. Chown, of Bradford, &c.

The proceedings commenced by singing, after which the Rev. J. GRAHAM offered prayer.

The Rev. Dr. TIDMAN then read an abstract of the sixty-eighth annual report, which, after some introductory remarks, referred to the missionaries and means at the society's command:—

Of the missionaries of the society whose names are given in the last report, amounting to one hundred and fifty-three, one only in actual service, the Rev. J. M. Lechler, of Salem, has been stricken by the hand of death. The Rev. Dr. Boaz, also, who had previously, from failure of health, relinquished his pastoral charge in Calcutta, while zealously engaged in promoting the interests of the society at home, was in the month of October called to his rest. Twenty-seven new labourers have been added to the missionary staff—a much larger increase than has been made in the same period for many years past. In this addition are included for Hindoo Christian brethren, three of whom had prosecuted an appropriate course of study during the preceding four years in the institution at Bhowanipore, and were ordained to the work of the ministry in Union Chapel, Calcutta, in March, 1861; and the fourth, who, in the early part of the present year, was ordained at Bangalore, with a view to be stationed at Belgaum, where he has laboured for some time past in the character of an Evangelist. The number of the society's missionaries for the present year is one hundred and seventy. They are appropriated as follows:—Polynesia, twenty-five; West Indies, twenty-two; South Africa, thirty-seven; China, nineteen; India, sixty-one; and Madagascar, six. The number of native agents, including teachers, catechists, and evangelists, cannot, from its frequent increase, be stated with precision, but the aggregate exceeds eight hundred. The number of missionary students is the same as that reported last year—forty; the candidates received being equal in number to those who have entered on their work. While the facts just enumerated, connected with the home interests of the society, cannot fail to awaken our thankfulness, the aspect presented by the several fields of actual mission labours is equally encouraging. The older missions of the society, with rare exceptions, have advanced in strength and prosperity; and new stations have been established in every chief section of its operations. And while Polynesia and Africa, India and China, have yielded their increase, the cloud, which for thirty years have poured down desolation and death on Madagascar, have fled before the breath of Jehovah; the Sun of Righteousness has risen on the land with healing in His wings; and the soil, fertilised by the blood of the martyrs, already abounds with thanksgiving and praise. Such are the rich, the unmerited rewards vouchsafed to our imperfect labours; and the Directors and friends of the society may heartily unite this day in the devout acknowledgment, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.'

The following is the statement of income and expenditure for the past year:—

RECEIPTS.	
Ordinary.	
Subscriptions, donations, and collections . . .	£46,475 5 4
Legacies	5,940 11 6
Funds for widows and orphans and super-annuated missionaries	3,364 2 11
Australia and foreign auxiliaries	2,333 5 10
Dividends, &c.	1,022 0 0
	59,135 5 7
Missionary stations	15,062 18 6
	74,198 4 1
Special.	
For the extension of Missions in India . . .	909 1 3
Ditto ditto China	1,533 15 0
For the relief of sufferers from famine in Southern India	767 12 0
For the re-establishment of Mission in Madagascar	1,321 7 4
For Central South Africa	346 5 6
Total	£79,576 5 2
EXPENDITURE.	
Home payments	£57,959 17 7
For India, special	1,263 9 1
For Madagascar	2,283 9 4
For Central South Africa	1,960 15 11
Raised and appropriated at the Mission Stations	14,467 13 5
	£77,935 5 4

The report then refers in detail to the several mission stations, commencing with Polynesia. The condition of the Georgian and Society Islands is encouraging. In Tahiti, amidst all the inducements presented to the people by the teachers of Romanism, few, very few, and those not distinguished by intelligence or reputation, have yielded to the seduction. On the other hand, the number of members in the Protestant churches of the island is greater by one-third than it was when Popery was first forced upon the Queen and her people by the arms of France. They amount to nearly 2,400. The mission churches

in Samoa are making progress in strength, liberality, and usefulness. In certain districts also a system of government has been introduced, well calculated to insure harmony, security, and freedom. The congregations are numerous and the churches increasing, and their liberality in the support and extension of the Gospel would supply an instructive example to Christians of greater age and higher culture. Their missionary contributions last year amounted to 1,268*l.*, exclusive of those for the support of 200 village pastors throughout the various islands. In the islands of Western Polynesia, including the New Hebrides and Loyalty Groups, the people have suffered very severely from the introduction of measles. In Mare, Lifu, Tana, and Aneiteum, a great number of the people fell victims to this malignant epidemic.

The Christians received the painful visitation with humble submission to the will of God; but the heathen ascribed it to the anger of their gods for the admission of Christian teachers, and the overthrow of their former superstitions. For a season the believers were in great danger from the threatened vengeance of their adversaries, but, at the visit of the John Williams, in September last, the ravages of disease had nearly ceased, and the missionaries, trusting in God, anticipated a return of peace and prosperity.

The several institutions in Polynesia for training native evangelists are conducted with great judgment and efficiency by the honoured brethren to whom this important charge is committed. The institution at Tahaa has ten students, that at Rarotonga twenty, and that at Malua, in the island of Upolu, eighty-five; making a total of 115 candidates for the different departments of missionary service in Polynesia. The churches throughout the Pacific have for many years possessed the sacred Scriptures in their own tongue, and in their several dialects. The report then refers to the West Indies. Several churches, both in Demerara and Berbice, have attained the ability and the honour of self-support, and now sustain to the society a filial relation, rather than that of beneficiaries and dependants. The missionaries in Jamaica report severally their conviction that the late revival, though attended by many indications of human weakness and sinfulness, was verily the work of God, and that it has resulted in abundant blessings to the people. The churches in South Africa are becoming increasingly self-supporting, and the missionaries labouring beyond the colony, among the Hottentots, Kaffirs, Griquas, and Bechuanaas, report favourably of the state and prospects of their several missions. The Rev. Robert Moffat, with his colleague, the Rev. Wm. Ashton, continue unweariedly to carry forward their varied labours at Kuruman. The former forwards the translation of a letter from Sebehwe, the son of Sebobi, a native Christian teacher, in reference to the lamented death of Mr. and Mrs. Helmore, their children, and attendants, attempting to vindicate Sekeletu, the substance of which has already appeared in our columns. Messrs. Price and McKenzie will take up a station between Kuruman and the Zambesi, and thus be ready to advance whenever a door of entrance to the Makololo may be opened. The report goes on to speak of China. In Hong Kong, and in the cities of Canton, Amoy, and Shanghai, the missionaries have continued their labours with unabated diligence and fidelity, attended with many encouraging proofs of the Divine favour. In Hong Kong, Dr. Legge informs the directors that the general aspect of the mission is cheering, and that the native church and congregation, under the able ministry of Teun-Sheen, is advancing in numbers, intelligence, and piety. In Canton, Messrs. Chalmers and Turner are about to form a second and third station in that populous city, and are well listened to by the natives. In Amoy, Messrs. Stronach and Lea have a church of 250 members, and have just erected an additional place of worship. In Shanghai, although the nearness and hostile intentions of the insurgents have been very unfavourable to missionary operations, our brethren, Messrs. Muirhead and Macgowan, with their native assistants, have lost no opportunity of prosecuting their labours, both in the city and the surrounding towns and villages. The report then refers to the late violent persecution which the native Christians of Pok-lo have suffered from their countrymen, involving the violent death of the venerable Ch'ei, the first convert in that district to the faith of Christ, which has also been lately detailed in our paper. The general aspect of the mission cause in India, according to the universal testimony not only of the actual labourers, but of all others interested in the object and acquainted with its progress, is highly animating. The sacred volume has also been widely circulated and read by millions, to multitudes its saving truths have already come, not in word only, but in power. From every class of idolaters to whom the missionary has consecrated his labours, souls have been given as his recompense. Numerous communities have been formed who have cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and have received the Lord Jesus as their Saviour and their King. The mission schools are crowded with Hindoo youths. The report then refers to Madagascar, and details the now familiar incidents of the accession of King Radama, the changes it has wrought in the prospects of the island, and the re-opening of Madagascar to the missionaries of Christianity. In reference to their future plans and to the visit of the Rev. W. Ellis, now at the Mauritius, the Directors say:—

It was foreseen that, in consequence of the unhealthy and perilous climate of the coast during the early months of the year, our friend would be detained in the colony during that season; but it was anticipated that he would possess opportunities for correspondence with both the King and the Malagasy Christians, and of

giving them assurance of the unabated sympathy and affection of their friends in Britain. These expectations have been fully answered; but the Sovereign and the people have rejoiced at the intelligence that he was so near their coast, and have we trust, ere this, given him a hearty welcome in the city of Antananarivo. Encouraged, also, not only by the permission, but the urgent wishes of Radama, and the importunate requests of the native Christians, the Directors resolved to use all practicable means to send forth, in the early part of the spring, a band of missionaries (not less than six in number), suitably qualified for the different departments of labour demanded by the new circumstances of the Church of Madagascar. In addition to three brethren directly bearing the missionary office, it was hoped that other devoted individuals might be found; one, at least, well instructed in surgery and medicine; a second, with qualifications for promoting general and Christian education, by training native schoolmasters; and a third, practically acquainted with the art of printing. The gracious Master when we serve crowned these efforts with success, and raised up six devoted labourers for these different departments of service. The Rev. Robert Toy and Mrs. Toy; Rev. John Duffus and Rev. W. E. Cousins; Dr. Alexander Davidson and Mrs. Davidson; Messrs. John Parrett and C. H. Stagg, embarked for Madagascar a month since; and it may be hoped that, under the guidance and protection of Him whom they seek to honour, they may, by the anniversary of the King's accession, reach their destination. They take with them a printing press and a supply of type, school materials, and other valuable appliances for the recommencement of the mission. The vessel is also stored with 10,600 copies of the New Testament and portions of the Old, in the Malagasy language, the munificent grant of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and the committee of the Religious Tract Society have added to her treasures 300 reams of paper to employ the new press. They have also borne a moiety of the cost of 20,600 volumes of Christian works translated into the vernacular, including James's "Anxious Inquirer," Hall's "Come to Jesus," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and other treatises suited to the present state of the people. The Directors thankfully acknowledge the munificent donation of 1,000*l.* from a friend who, with Christian modesty, withholds his name, towards this re-commencement of the mission in Madagascar; and they have received also for the same object, from other generous donors, an additional amount, together with dividends, of 820*l.* But these contributions fall short of the outlay incurred by more than 400*l.*; while the expenditure of the society will be increased by not less than 2,000*l.* per annum.

The CHAIRMAN, in the course of his opening speech, briefly referred to some of the salient features of the report, to the ground there was for thankfulness to God, and to the responsibility resting upon all in the sight of God, as being privileged to become fellow-labourers in this work. He esteemed it an especial privilege to be allowed to attend a meeting of this sort—a meeting which embraced Christians of all denominations—Christians who had not uniformity but unity. (Cheers.) He trusted that that unity may not be allowed to rest in name only, but that there might be that spirit of love to the one centre which should exclude from their view any differences in the path by which they might arrive there.

The Rev. Dr. JAMES CAMPBELL, in an eloquent speech, moved the following resolution:—

That the report, of which an abstract has been given, be approved and adopted, and that it be forthwith printed and circulated by the Directors. That this meeting humbly presents its tribute of gratitude and praise to the God of all grace for the measure of success with which He has rewarded the operations of the society in its various extended fields of labour. It regards with peculiar pleasure the increase of the mission churches, and their steady progress in the Christian duty of self-support, the advancement of Scriptural education in the mission schools, and the increased efforts more recently adopted for the mental and moral improvement of Hindoo females of the upper classes; and the meeting would especially express its thankfulness to the Divine Head of the Church that He is raising up for the service of the society an enlarged number of devoted missionaries from the Christian youth of our country, and from the churches redeemed by His grace from among the heathen.

The Rev. Dr. THOMPSON, of Edinburgh, in seconding the resolution, dwelt at some length upon the wonderful success of missionary enterprise from the times of Carey and Fuller to the present day. He found that a number of new stations had been originated during the past year, that the unprecedented number of twenty-seven new missionaries had been sent to the mission field, that a great number of the early churches had become self-supporting, and that 15,000*l.* have come into the treasury from the missionary stations. The time had come in the history of missions and of this country when they must even contribute for the extension of the kingdom of God up to the point of self-denial. (Hear, hear.) Not only should the collectors' books have a column for *£ s. d.*, but a column for missionaries, and London millionaires should not be asked how many pounds they would contribute, but how many missionaries they would support. (Cheers.)

The Rev. R. D. WILSON, of Birmingham, moved the second resolution:—

That this meeting feels constrained to record its deep and grateful sense of the Divine mercy in the reopening of Madagascar to the labours of Christian missionaries—in the wonderful preservation and increase of the native churches during their severe and prolonged persecution—in the accession to the throne of a Sovereign with views of civil and religious freedom alike liberal, benevolent, and just. And the meeting would earnestly invoke the prayers of God's people on behalf of the King, the native churches with their pastors, and the band of Christian missionaries sent forth by the society to aid in the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the land.

The speaker eloquently expatiated on the triumphs of the Gospel in Madagascar.

The Rev. J. P. CHOWN seconded the resolution, and spoke with much power in illustration of three thoughts:—compassion for the woes and sufferings of humanity that still remain in the world; thanksgiving for the position in which we are placed, the means we may make use of, and the blessing that

has already been granted; and confident assurance in the anticipation of the Saviour's ultimate and universal triumph.

The Rev. W. CUTHBERTSON, of Sydney, in moving the reappointment of the committee, treasurer, and secretaries, said that having recently come from Australia, it might be desirable for him to make special reference to missions in the South Seas. Next to the Bible Society, no Christian enterprise brought out the liberality of the Australian churches so largely as that conducted by the London Missionary Society, and kindred institutions. The Australian colonies might become a missionary station for the evangelisation of India, China, and the South Seas, and the Protestant churches there were endeavouring to impress the people with a sense of their responsibility in view of so glorious a destiny. In Tasmania the brethren had determined to found an academy, by which the society at home would be relieved of the education of the dear children, and not merely of the orphan children, of the missionaries labouring in the South Seas. Located there, they would be within a much more easy distance of their parents, and might occasionally be visited. (Hear, hear.) But, beyond this, the colonists were struggling to do a home missionary work in their own country, and so to bring up the churches to the point which should enable them to render the chief support of the South Sea Missions. It was also believed that the churches of the Australian colonies could do an important work in China. Some of the politicians of these islands were fearful of being flooded with Chinese; but the churches were hailing a wise and moderate immigration, and were using their best endeavours to give to the Chinese seekers for gold something better than that for which they sought. Already a blessing had attended their efforts. He might mention the case of a Chinese merchant who had gone to Sydney, and who, professing himself a Christian, asked to be admitted to the Church. He was examined and approved, and his conduct had adorned his profession above many. He was a truly pious man, and was in the habit of calling his countrymen together, from 300 to 400 at a time, and preaching to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Cheers.) The Word of God had been supplied to them in their own tongue, and he had been deeply affected at times to hear them attempting to sing together hymns in praise of the Lord Jesus. In the island of Tahiti there were evidences of the aggressive efforts which are being zealously made by the Roman Catholics. It was the manifest policy of the Romanists of France to get possession of the South Sea Islands and to spread themselves in India. The French Government, as it was known, had projected a new steam route to India, and one of the clauses of the deed of the company made it imperative to take out a certain number of missionaries free, and that all above that number shall be taken at half-price. When that scheme came into action, India and China and the South Seas would be flooded with Roman Catholic priests and Sisters of Mercy. Let such a fact as this be a stimulus to Protestant missionary zeal. (Hear, hear.) Some degree of liberty still existed in Tahiti, and the Rev. W. Howe was still there prosecuting his work, and spiritual good was being done. In Samoa the Gospel had effected most gratifying triumphs. At least five thousand men and women had been brought from the degradation of heathenism to sit, clothed in their right minds, at the feet of Jesus. The recent intelligence from Sydney respecting Tanna was very sad, and it must have been something very urgent indeed which induced Mr. Paton to retreat, for he had resolved never to do so, although he had been some time there, and had buried his wife and child there; and the other missionary, too, was a true and brave man. But notwithstanding all these hindrances to the work, he was persuaded that it would not be relinquished, and that the day would come when Polynesia should be won for Christ.

The Rev. W. HILL, of Calcutta, said that, in the face of all the obstacles that were arrayed against it, the Gospel had made most gratifying progress in India, and was producing much indirect as well as direct good. There were at least 125,000 native Christians, and there was every reason to believe that their ranks would increase just in proportion to the number of missionaries sent forth amongst the people. In conclusion, he called upon mothers to dedicate their sons to the work of missions, and upon the churches to send them forth to their work.

The resolution having been adopted, a collection was made, and the proceedings terminated.

CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The annual public meeting of this association, established to promote the cause of Voluntary and Religious Education, was held on Wednesday evening last week, at the Congregational Library, Blomfield-street, Samuel Morley, Esq., chairman and treasurer of the board, presiding. The room was well filled. The Rev. W. BURGESS having opened the proceedings with prayer,

The Rev. W. J. UNWIN, M.A., president of the Homerton Training Institution read the report. It stated that—

Forty-four students are at present in that college. During the past year thirty-four young persons having satisfactorily completed their course, have been appointed to schools. The Model and Practising Schools are in a state of great efficiency. The fees received from the scholars have amounted during the year to 500*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.*, a larger sum than has been realised since the opening of

the schools. In addition to this sum 110*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*, have been paid by the parents for books and materials, making a total of 610*l.* 12*s.* During the past year Mr. Alexander Gunning has been appointed to conduct the Institution for Training Native Teachers at Calabar, Jamaica; and Mr. Charles Stage has recently sailed for Madagascar, under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, to organise schools and train native teachers in this most interesting sphere. The Board has much satisfaction in this extension of its operations, and is gratified that seventeen of its teachers have been prepared to conduct educational institutions in heathen lands. A number of schools in various parts of the country have been inspected, and parents' meetings held. A pamphlet, entitled "The Parent and the School," has been issued, of which 7,000 have been already circulated. In respect of funds, the Board expresses its indebtedness to the liberality of a few friends, whose special donations have enabled it to meet, not only the current expenditure of the year, but some additional expenses, which the state of the college premises rendered necessary. The Board, however, appeal for a regular income of 2,000*l.* a year. The Board is anxious to raise a special fund to aid schools in poor districts. Reference was made to the report of the Royal Commission, and to the debates on the Revised Code, and, in conclusion, the Board reiterate the views it has always maintained—that the success of schools will depend, as it ought to do, on the practical character of the instruction offered to the industrious classes and its direct bearing on the future pursuits of the scholars. The Board does not desire to limit the education imparted to the poor, but it has always contended that the branches of education which lie at the root of all sound intellectual culture, and are intimately related to success in life, must have precedence of all others, and that no amount of superficial information on a variety of subjects will compensate for failure in reading, in writing, and commercial arithmetic.

In submitting the audited accounts Mr. Morley said the financial position of the Board was equal to that of any former period of its existence. The total receipts were 1,973*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.*, and the expenditure 1,732*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.*, leaving a balance in hand of 240*l.* 6*s.* 2*d.*

The CHAIRMAN then proceeded to say that there were circumstances which ought to be regarded as encouraging by the members of this association, all of whom, he was persuaded, felt as deep an interest in voluntary religious education as ever, and were not less determined than in previous years to bear their testimony in its favour. The recent proceedings in Parliament had tended to confirm them in the conviction that they were right in the position they had taken. (Hear.) It had been shown that out of the 23,000 schools in the country only 8,000 had participated in the grants that were made from the public purse, so that 15,000 schools got no help at all from that quarter, while the large proportion of the 8,000 that received aid did not require it, because they were frequented by the children of tradesmen and farmers who were well able to pay for the education of their families. This was the distinct testimony borne by the Education Commission in its report. And it also appeared from that valuable document that three-fourths of the scholars in the State-supported schools never acquired the ability to read and write with ease, because the elements of education were neglected by the teachers in favour of accomplishments which the children of the poor did not need; so that a comparatively small number of those for whom the Minutes of Council were intended derived any benefit whatever from them. (Hear, hear.) The system, too, was becoming more than ever centralising, and a barrier was placed between the managers and the teachers, and between the teachers and the parents of the scholars, detrimental to all parties, and especially so to the teachers. He rejoiced that the manifold evils involved in State education had been begun to be seen by our leading writers in the periodical and newspaper press. A most valuable article had appeared in the *Westminster Review*, and another, and a still better one, in the *British Quarterly Review*, and a series of well-seasoned leaders had come out day by day in the *Times*, *Daily News*, and other journals of influence, all showing that truth upon this question was making progress in the public mind. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Tremenhoe, moreover, had issued a paper of great practical value, in which he asserted that the Government grants might safely be diminished, and the people be relied upon to pay for the education of their children. Besides, the Government itself had made a courageous attempt to diminish the existing and growing evils of the system; and it was much to be regretted that the power which they had called into being had been found too strong for them. The tenacity with which the recipients of the public grants were clinging to State support was to his own mind most affecting and lamentable, and proved that the system was operating fatally upon the moral sense of a large class of the community; and if not checked it would produce a very deteriorating effect upon the national character. (Hear, hear.) It was freely admitted by those who opposed State aid to education that the very poor needed various kinds of co-operation in this work; and this could be supplied to the full extent that was necessary, by Voluntary agency. But more important than any money contributions would be the impressing upon the minds of parents the importance of education for their children, and the fostering of self-reliant habits. Kindly words on the subject of Temperance would also be most valuable; for the money spent by working men in public-houses would in many cases educate the whole family. (Cheers.)

BENJAMIN SCOTT, Esq., in moving the adoption of the report, testified, as one of the auditors, to the admirable way in which the business of the Board was conducted, and then proceeded to illustrate and

defend the position which it had occupied from the time of its formation, and to show that the predictions which had been made in reference to the ill-working of Government education had been fulfilled in a most signal manner. It was said by the founders of this Board, when the Government system began, that the education imparted by the State would produce unsubstantial and unsatisfactory results; that it would not be such as the poorer classes required; that a class of pupil-teachers would be forced into existence and become discontented with their position in society; and that a professedly national system would fail of being national in its operation, and only influence a fraction of the nation. The Inspectors' Reports and the Report of the Royal Commission confirmed all these anticipations, and to the fullest extent. Happily, many of the early advocates of State Education, were now convinced that the system was essentially defective, and were found, like Mr. Harry Chester, advocating that the grants "should now be made on a slowly expiring scale, to enable the schools to grow up to independence." Under these circumstances the friends of voluntary education ought to be far more zealous in the cause and liberal in their contributions than they were. The financial position of this Board was far from being what it should be, and must not be regarded as satisfactory, because the many did not subscribe. Although it was true that the funds were larger than in the previous year, yet there would in fact have been a deficiency, had it not been for a number of gentlemen who gave 50*l.* a-piece. Congregational churches now numbered by thousands, and they largely availed themselves of the help of this Board; and if they were alive to their own interests, as well as did their duty, they would render to it far more adequate support. Manchester sent more money to the funds of the Board than all the other provincial towns put together; and some of the counties contributed almost nothing to this fundamental society, as he might well describe it. Every congregation could at least send 10*s.*, and many could easily send 1*l.*; and he might say that most of those which now contributed only 10*s.* or 1*l.* could as readily give 5*l.* He had become so thoroughly ashamed of the contributions from Surrey, his own county, that he had resolved to endeavour to bring about a reformation; and should be very glad to know that some friend of the Board in each county would do the same before the next annual meeting. If this were done, a much more cheering and satisfactory report would then be made.

The CHAIRMAN, while fully agreeing with Mr. Scott as to the inadequacy of the support rendered to the Board, felt it desirable to state that the special contributions had only just about covered the extra expenses that had been incurred in the repairs of the college premises; so that the general income remained pretty much the same as before, and was not less.

The Rev. JOHN PILLANS seconded the resolution. He expressed a hearty concurrence in the principles of the society, and dwelt upon the supreme importance of education being religious in its character.

The Rev. Dr. VAUGHAN supported the resolution. He quite sympathised, he said, with the remark made by Mr. Scott, that the balance sheet which had been submitted to the meeting, though it was good so far as to show that the treasurer had money in hand, was not good when looked at in connection with the whole denomination, or with that body of people who might be supposed to sympathise with the object of the Board. (Hear, hear.) But the fact was that the whole question, as it is associated with the Congregational body, had been greatly damaged by the Government. If things had been left to their natural course, the Congregationalists would have been a united and not as now a divided body, some saying, when money was asked for, "You might get assistance from the State like your neighbours," and thus those who would have otherwise been willing to contribute lost sympathy. Providence seemed to be bringing us round out of the State. He had heard persons complain that the members of this Board had been disposed sometimes to use hard words about those who had not joined themselves to it; it was hardly possible, perhaps, that this should not be so; but surely they must now all feel, as Englishmen, that they ought to subordinate all little personal things to the great cause, and unitedly to put their hand to the work that was waiting to be done. (Hear, hear.) When the Privy Council system was originated, he had certainly hoped that its aim and tendency would be to give a useful education to those classes of the people who were fairly entitled to help from some quarter. But there should now be no doubt that the work had drifted greatly out of that track. (Hear, hear.) The object seemed to be not to diffuse a useful education among the necessitous, but to keep up another kind of education for a class that was not necessitous. (Hear, hear.) And even that was not the worst; for it was obvious that the attempt was to make this a second ecclesiastical establishment, and to work into it all the elements that belong to such an establishment. All this was to be greatly deplored, for it was a very grave mischief to the people; and he thought that we ought to encourage all attempts made on the part of the Government to retrace their steps; and he wished we had seen our way to extend a more hearty encouragement to them in what they have done. (Hear, hear.) In future let us endeavour to strengthen their hands; for it was quite consistent to get what we consider to be an evil reduced as low as we can, as the next best thing to getting rid of it

altogether, and as that which must precede it. He had always said that it was most desirable to have nothing to do with Government aid, and when he consented to the Privy Council system at first, his idea was only for a limited and temporary aid. (Hear, hear.) There was no feature of our social system so distinctive of us as a people as our voluntarism. We might count up by scores the things that are doing amongst ourselves by voluntary means which were handed over to the Government in all the other countries of Europe. It was only in religion and education that we were children; we were men in everything else. (Hear, hear.) Were we to be so for ever? He hoped not. (Cheers.) Dr. Vaughan then proceeded to dwell upon the fact that mere national civilisation had never done much towards the moral elevation of men, and to illustrate the importance and meaning of education, being religious in its aim and tendency. And in conclusion he exhorted the friends of voluntary education to be steadfast and immovable in the advocacy of their cause, assured that it would one day triumph.

The report was then adopted.

E. BAINES, Esq., M.P., moved the second resolution:—

That this meeting congratulates the friends of voluntary and religious education that their opposition to the minutes of Privy Council has been vindicated by the report of the Royal Commission, by the admissions of influential persons officially connected with the administration of the Parliamentary grant, by the reasonings of the leading organs of the press, by the discussions in Parliament, and by the efforts of her Majesty's Government to alter a system which has proved alike expensive and ineffective; and while regretting that the clamour of interested parties has obstructed the course of wise legislation, they feel that no stronger argument against Government interference can be adduced than the fact that those who participate in the Parliamentary grant have frustrated the first attempt to economise the public expenditure and to secure for that expenditure adequate results.

He felt sincere pleasure and gratitude that the institution at Homerton held on its noble course with so much success. It was an establishment that if it had been connected with the Government would have cost the country some thousands of pounds a-year. And when it was said that vast sums of money were annually necessary for the support of training colleges, the friends of voluntary education could point to Homerton College to show that it was not so. He congratulated Mr. Morley on the fact of his still remaining at the head of an institution that was doing an immense amount of practical good. It well deserved the zealous support of the Congregational body, who ought to feel it a high honour to be able to say that to them belonged the only training college in the country not receiving Government aid. (Cheers.) Those belonging to the other denominations obtained their support largely from the State, and one of them received 99 per cent. of its whole expenditure from the public taxes. Proceeding to illustrate the mischievous working of the Privy Council system, as shown in the recent contest between the managers and teachers of schools, and the Legislature of the country, Mr. Baines pointed out many cases in which rich schools shamefully obtained the public money, to which they were not entitled, and did not require, while poor schools remained destitute of State aid. At Glossop there was a school founded by the Duke of Norfolk, and endowed with 4,000*l.*, which received from 170*l.* to 180*l.* from the Government. Another, at Faversham, in Kent, which possessed an endowment of 600*l.* a-year, received from the Government 380*l.* per annum, and raised only 38*l.* a-year in voluntary subscriptions. Here was an extravagant and most shameful waste of public money. (Hear, hear.) There was every encouragement for the friends of voluntary education to continue to assert their principles, and he believed they could not maintain them in a more efficient and practical way than by giving a liberal support to this valuable institution.

The Rev. A. MACKENNAL, B.A., of Surbiton, seconded the resolution in an eloquent speech, and it was unanimously adopted.

The Rev. J. C. HARRISON, in moving the third resolution, delivered an earnest address to the young men and women in training for the office of teachers in Homerton College, who were present in considerable numbers. The resolution was in these terms:—

That this meeting recognises in the altered tone of public sentiment in relation to Government interference the importance of the testimony which has been maintained by the Congregational Board of Education, and trusts that by a more liberal and general support it will be enabled to infuse increased efficiency into its operations, and to undertake some departments of effort essential to success.

CHARLES JUPE, Esq., of Mere, seconded the resolution, and said he was very glad on account of what the Board had done and was doing. He believed its usefulness to be great and manifold; and that its influence for good was not to be measured by its direct work. He spoke of the competition that prevailed between the State and Voluntary schools in the country, and said that the one with which he was connected obtained three times as many children at the present time as the school which received 600*l.* a-year from the State. He was convinced that many of the Congregational churches were beginning to be ashamed of receiving Government aid; and was utterly amazed how any individuals could take public money for their schools, and be at the same time members of the Liberation Society. Such cases he had known, but trusted they would soon cease to exist.

The resolution having been adopted, the doxology was sung, and the proceedings terminated.